

THE

MONTHLY MISCELLANY.

VOL. III.

SEPTEMBER, 1840.

No. 3.

THE PROGRESSIVE CHARACTER OF CHRISTIANITY,

AN EXPLANATION OF ITS DIFFERENT INTERPRETATIONS.

CHRISTIANITY is a progressive religion; or rather, the reception of it in the world is gradual. In itself, of course, it is perfect and admits of no improvement. But relatively to man, it is continually unfolding itself in clearer light and beaming forth with features more and more distinct. There was a difference between the mode in which the Gospel was embraced by the immediate followers of Christ and that in which it has been received since. They believed it on authority—took it as certain because of the then visible miraculous credentials of its Founder. Without perhaps fully comprehending they adopted it, in its simplicity—uncorrupted and unchanged. But as it left Judea, was spread in other lands and came down to succeeding generations, it must have entered and been partially concealed by the fogs of error and idolatry. To suppose the human mind capable of preserving it uncorrupt, is to suppose the human mind perfect, and consequently without need of a revelation. If men were able at once to take in the whole signification and beauty of Christianity—to keep it from being obscured by any corruptions or deteriorated by any foreign admixtures, then obviously there was little or no necessity for its introduction. The very perfection of the Christian system,—the purity and excellence of its morality, the elevation of its doctrines, in short, the very fact that it was intended to be a model, and guide and goal,

designed to act as a pioneer, a pillar of fire and a cloud,—this very fact proves that its truth and worth were to be discovered by degrees.

This view, we know, has been and is still rejected by many. In the contests between different sects and churches each has laid claim to the possession of primitive Christianity. The idea that there is any such thing as improvement in our Christianity, has been regarded with horror. The notion that it is to be progressive in its admission among men, has been esteemed most dangerous heresy. We are sometimes told, that we cannot know any thing more of the religion of Jesus than our fathers knew, and that our posterity can never be essentially wiser in this matter than ourselves. Indeed, not unfrequently a departure from ancient opinions is made the very essence of error. Now the sophistry involved in such assertions is easily exposed. They proceed on a false statement of the point in dispute. They assume that when we assert the possibility of obtaining more correct conceptions of Christianity, we mean it is possible to improve Christianity itself. We mean no such thing. The Gospel as it came from the lips of Jesus was, we admit, perfect. But men were not prepared fully and entirely to understand it. It was left in the world. It was concealed and disfigured, to some extent, by superstition and ignorance; until now we must go back and endeavour to clear away the mists, remove human additions, and strive to reach the pure fountain, the heaven-sent and perfect model. When we say then, that there is such a thing as improvement in our religion, we mean that it consists in our rising up to that religion; not in adding to it. When we speak of the Gospel as progressive, we mean not only that its diffusion is gradual, but that mankind may be approaching nearer and nearer to a correct appreciation of its truths. Reformation consists in this process—this going back or ascending to the uncorrupt religion of Christ. What did Luther and his coadjutors, but strip off some of the corruptions of the church of Rome? But they performed not the whole work. Neither did the Puritans. Neither shall we; nor our posterity. Never will there be an end to the work of reform, until men become perfect, for error grows out of our intellectual and moral inability to perceive the perfectness of Christianity; and reform is nothing but the growth of the human mind and heart in knowledge and goodness. Here there is the true idea of the progressive character of the Gospel. It was the revelation of pure truth; it makes its way, according as the world becomes able to receive its instructions.

This view finds ample support in the words of Christ and in the history of the Church. Jesus compared the introduction and advancement of his religion to the grain of mustard-seed, the little leaven, the growth of the corn. He spoke of the wheat and tares which were to spring up side by side. The Apostles too were to go forth and preach; some would hear them, and some would not. The Saviour was indeed to be the light of the world; but to dawn and spread and cheer the earth by a gradually increasing illumination. Nothing can be more clear than the evidence afforded in the Evangelical record, that Christianity was to make its way slowly and by degrees. The same fact is confirmed, as we said, by history. Hardly had Christ left earth before controversies broke out and errors crept in. Soon idolatry polluted the Church. Soon the philosophy of the East added to or adulterated the simple doctrines of the Cross. Soon was established the Romish Church. And even now prevail opinions—not few in number—born not of Scripture, but born of Paganism and superstition. All this however, we may add in passing, is no objection to Christianity. On the contrary, it is a strong argument for its Divine origin. The inability of man at once to receive and understand the Gospel in its full meaning and simplicity, proves that it was no work of mortal hands.

We have thus briefly set forth the progressive character of our religion, because we think it a truth which solves a difficulty more or less perplexing to the thoughtful and serious. Many such have been troubled at the existence of so many contending sects in Christendom. This fact, moreover, has often been brought forward by the skeptical as a strong objection to our faith. If then we can show it to be in harmony with the usual providence of God and just what we ought to expect, something may be done towards increasing confidence in the revelations of Jesus. This, we suppose, may be accomplished by applying the doctrine we have given concerning the character of Christianity as a progressive religion to the fact in question.

The difficulty, as we have intimated, which troubles many thoughtful and serious minds, is the existence in Christian lands of so many conflicting sects and sharp controversies. We are early taught that the Gospel is a revelation from God for the salvation of mankind. We look into the history of the Church and around upon the world, and find everywhere varying creeds, jarring doctrines, parties hostile in opinion, and what is worse, hostile in feeling also. This state of

things began almost immediately after the ascension of the Saviour. From that time until now the voice of dispute has never been hushed. Jealousies, recrimination, endeavours to destroy the influence and good name of opponents, have but too often characterized the several denominations of Christians. Now at first sight all this seems very strange. We are inclined to think such a state of things could hardly be the consequence of a mission from Heaven. Our impression, perhaps, is that a system so important would be effectually guarded from great misapprehension. The rise, power and extensive prevalence of the Romish Church—a mass, as we are sometimes told by the bigoted, of error, sin and corruption,—and the divisions among Protestants are facts not to be denied, and facts that must be accounted for to satisfy inquiring men. What has been the most common method of doing this? Why, each sect has claimed to be orthodox and held its peculiarities to be essential to salvation, and as a necessary consequence, considered those who rejected its creed as in fatal error. For example, the Calvinists, to be strictly consistent, are obliged to assume the high ground, that their system alone is pure Christianity, and that all who will not enter into their communion must inevitably be shut out from heaven. Although composing but a small portion of the Christian world, they are forced to sit in judgement upon and to excommunicate all the rest. We do not here bring this statement as an obnoxious charge against the Calvinists; but only as an illustration and as the unavoidable consequence of their theology. We know indeed, that in these days many who profess in the main to hold to the creed of the Genevan professor start back from a conclusion so melancholy, and admit that, in some way or another, individuals without the pale of their church may enjoy the favour of God. But this is a sacrifice of logic upon the altar of benevolence. It is the reluctance of human nature to follow out the system to its legitimate results. It is moreover a plain inconsistency. For not only the Calvinists, but all sects who make a belief in their peculiarities essential, must excommunicate all of Christendom except themselves. If they are right, all the rest must be wrong; if they alone have the true Gospel, all the rest must have a false Gospel, and must likewise be in imminent peril.

Here then is the manner, in which those who claim to be the orthodox must account for the divided condition of the visible Church. They must assume themselves to be the only true believers; and all

others, owing to some moral obliquity, criminal negligence, or arbitrary decree of God, are cast out as heretics and exposed to condemnation. Now is this reasonable and satisfactory? Does not our very nature rise up at once against it? Does it not confine within an exceedingly narrow sphere the prevalence and efficacy of the Gospel? Can any one even dream, for a moment, that the favour of Heaven is to be denied to all save a comparatively small band of exclusionists? Is there not in such a theory something hard to be reconciled with the everywhere manifest benevolence of the Creator? Are not the promises, assurances and prophecies of Christ in direct opposition to it? And is it not passing strange, that the sectarian thinks not of the result to which his pretensions lead? When on some little spot of earth he stands up to denounce as in certain peril, exposed to everlasting perdition, all who join not with him and his party, does he remember that his assumption of infallibility condemns by far the larger portion of Christendom,—as much God's creatures and children as he? Whatever view the sectarian may take, it is at least clear to all lovers of humanity not blinded by bigotry, that the doctrine of the sectarian cannot be true.

This method then failing, the question returns—how shall the divisions and controversies, the many and varying conceptions of Christianity that have obtained in the world, be explained. The full answer to this question involves many considerations. We shall confine ourselves to a notice of the light thrown upon it by the fact, that the Gospel is a progressive religion. Keeping this fact in mind, there is a rational account to be given of the imperfect reception of Christianity and the various aspects under which it has been regarded by mankind. It seems to be the purpose of God to create men to be educated, to be made wise and better, by the developement and healthful action of all their powers and capacities. Whatever may be the ultimate design of the Almighty, whatever place we are hereafter to fill in His incomprehensible plans, thus much appears evident,—we are placed on earth to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. To aid us in this work, to enlighten, purify and elevate the soul, various messengers have been employed, the greatest and best of whom was Jesus Christ. He came, and left in the world his perfect instructions, to make their way into the minds and to exert their benign power over the hearts of men. Now consider the ignorance and superstition—the strange systems of philosophy and stranger

systems of idolatry, which Christianity had to encounter ; think of the deep-rooted prejudices, the time-hallowed institutions, with which it came in contact ;—and then ask whether it was to be expected, that its whole truth and beauty should be seen at once and by all with equal distinctness. Was earth capable of thus reflecting the perfection of heaven ? Were men ready and competent to receive the revelation in all its depth and richness of meaning ? Certainly not. It was the standard toward which they were to move—the end they were to struggle to reach ; and to imagine this could be done at a single bound, were to imagine the execution of an impossibility. Could those who had peopled all places with forms of superstition—who had been accustomed to glittering pomp and mystery, receive entire and without any mistake the pure and simple Gospel ? To suppose this, would be to suppose the working of a perpetual miracle. Christianity must be accompanied by a constant supernatural influence to communicate it uncorrupt to the human mind, or else it must be exposed to more or less of misapprehension, until men in wisdom and virtue grow up to it. It was left, we know, to make its way by degrees and according to the natural laws of the human soul, and this will account for the various forms under which it has been and continues to be adopted. The few fundamental and most operative truths of religion are common to all sects. But apart from these, interpretations of Scripture, speculations and theories, have been almost numberless and ever changing.

And in this there is no marvel. The existence of any particular church is but the outward manifestation of a certain class of minds more or less enlarged and cultivated. The form in which Christianity is embraced in any age, is a sign of the moral and intellectual condition of that age. And he is but a poor philosopher, as well as an uncharitable Christian, who assumes that he alone is right, while all his predecessors and cotemporaries who differ from him are and have been in dangerous error. Yet of this sort of assumption there is not a little in the world. Follow out to their true conclusions the positions taken by some, and what melancholy work they make. We must believe that the Romish Church, which shielded Christianity from destruction and was for centuries the only form in which it was visible, we must believe this Church to have been all error and all evil. Nay, we must go even farther than this. We must perhaps look for the heir of Christ's promises among some small denomination, and regard

all the rest, and by far the greater number of believers, as outcasts. This is the necessary consequence to which they are forced, who cannot see the Gospel putting forth its divine power any where except within the narrow limits of their own sect, who set down all departures from their creed as departures from religion, and who think that only within their frame-work, of human manufacture, can the spirit of Christ dwell or souls offer an acceptable sacrifice to God. But we look upon this matter very differently. We believe that the variations in men's views of Christianity grow out of variations in their mental and moral advancement, that discussion signifies the great struggle after truth, and that unless all were alike in mind and heart, no other than the present state of things could have been anticipated. The revelation of Jesus has been seen from different points—through different media by those belonging to different climes, nurtured among different institutions, and enjoying greater or less light. With such a fact before us, is it extraordinary, that much error was in earlier times mixed with the Gospel, and that there have been sects and divisions in the Church ever since?

The hints we have now thrown out in regard to the progressive character of Christianity, and the rational explanation they give of the multiplicity of sects in the Church, serve at once to guard against the insinuations of skepticism and to enforce true liberality and toleration. Mankind are on a pilgrimage towards the temple of all truth. They have not all started at the same moment nor under the same circumstances. Accordingly we find them at different stages on the same road. Still they are journeying forward,—and the sincere and faithful will at last arrive at the same home. The application of this figure, and the truth it illustrates, no one would dispute in regard to art, science, literature. Why then should any dispute its application to religion? To do so would be to separate the dealings of Providence on this subject from its dealings on all other subjects. This men very frequently do, and thereby perplex themselves with many difficulties. But take a different view, and are not faith and catholicism both promoted? The revelation hath been made. Man is permitted to study and apply it. He is engaged in this task. How is he to perform it? By growing wiser and better. Moral and religious truth is obtained by the progress of the human soul. Christianity must be, in a certain sense, developed within our bosoms; or rather, our bosoms must be cleansed so as to reflect its unearthly beauty. Unless therefore we

deny what all experience teaches—that men are not placed in like circumstances, do not enjoy the same facilities for intellectual and moral improvement; and unless we farther assume what we know is not the fact—that the Gospel is forced upon the mind and heart by the presence of constant miracles; we must expect that different views of religion, as well as different views of every other subject, will obtain in the world. So long as this diversity reaches not the great foundation truths of Christianity, there need be no alarm, and there should be no indulgence in bigotry and exclusiveness. That these great foundation truths are not very frequently rejected might, had we room, be easily shown. It is however sufficient to say here, that by applying to various denominations the Scripture test—"by their fruits ye shall know them," good disciples and true come from all directions and out of every sect, to form the great company of faithful followers of him who said, "Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you." Let this then be the only demand made on fellow-believers. Let all things be discussed, examined, proved. Let all be affectionately zealous to carry onward and forward the work of reform. But while doing this, it is not necessary for any to claim infallibility, or to force themselves off from brethren who receive not all the articles of their creed or all the forms of their worship, as if they were enemies. Christian fellowship and friendship may exert their benign influence to no small extent even where, and whilst, wide and multiform differences of opinion exist. "Hearts may agree where heads differ" is a motto, which with the cross and the crown may well be engraven on the seal with which the followers of Jesus stamp their covenant of union and love.

T. B. F.

A SISTER'S INFLUENCE.

THE relation sustained by the sister to the brother is one of peculiar tenderness. Perhaps there is none more free from the cold mixture of selfishness, the heartless calculations of interest, the admiration of extrinsic accomplishments, and the transient enthusiasm of sudden friendships. To our natural loves, as well as to our more adventitious and conventional attachments, there are different degrees of

depth and permanence. Even in families there are intimacies. They may spring from a particular congeniality of tastes, or from external circumstances. The nearness of brother and sister admits not many intervening influences; the causes that may disturb their harmony are comparatively few; their affection is little exposed to the coolness of indifference, or the more fatal breath of a torturing jealousy.

The instructions of the fondest parent sometimes fall ineffective upon the heart even of an affectionate child. Obedience is rendered; but it is rather the obedience of awe and an imperious sense of dutiful respect, than the free, voluntary offering. The well-meant rebukes of a brother are often spurned by a brother's mis-called independence and high-spiritedness. The gratuitous admonitions of relatives of less remote proximity, of kind aunts and still kinder grandmothers, are liable to rather severe criticism, even perchance to decided neglect. To say that all this is not as it should be, is not the present purpose; nor to determine where censure should fall. It might not be difficult to show, that neither party is wholly the aggrieved. But the fact seems generally to be as stated. A principal cause doubtless exists in the want of sympathy, that is felt by the subject of the discipline or the counsel, with the spirit in which it is administered. The adviser seems not to enter into the feelings, nor even to weigh the reasons, that to the advised are of no slight magnitude or importance. Especially is this the case when a wide diversity in age removes the one from the other.

But to a brother the sister's gentlest counsel comes with a wonderfully persuasive power. No harshness breaks the deep, silent impression it leaves. Her thoughts have been one with his. Together they have rejoiced, and they have wept in company. No gladness has been prisoned in the breast of either, for that were the saddest sorrow. No grief has been uncommunicated, for that were to reject from pain its sure and ever-ready antidote. The same air-castles have been builded in their sunny imaginings, and the cold chill has passed over both alike as a stern, dull reality has closed round them. Here then all is sincerest sympathy, all is unfeigned disinterestedness. So long as principle stands unshaken and holy resolves and the sacred promptings of virtue are cherished, so long they will grow stronger still and be bound closer to the breast, by the animating hopes and the grateful benisons of a watchful and admiring witness. The rebuke for some weak error—some thoughtless departure from the right line

is administered as mildly as if a guardian angel's monitions were breathed into the soul. The erring one is drawn back by an agency almost as imperceptible as if the arm of an unseen protector were around him. Or if he has stepped yet farther aside, and guilt hangs its iron bracelets about him, while daily the heart grows harder, the conscience weaker, and the sensibilities duller, how does one melancholy gaze from those deep tender eyes plead with, and overpower him! How eloquent, more than with the eloquence of words, is that suppressed, unanswerable sigh! It has the keenness of the most pointed upbraiding, but none of its venom. It chides more loudly than the reproach of the angry injured, but gives none of its offence. It affects no authority for its complaint, and therefore is its authority more stern; for it is clothed with the simple majesty of truth and goodness. And then, if in humanity's latest struggles the moral force is lost and reason is bowed down, how fervent must be the intercession that goes up for him whose ears no longer hear even a sister's entreaties, whose eyes no longer witness her agony! How full of faith and how availing must be the prayers that ascend from her stainless bosom!

The general sentiment of mankind seems to testify to what has been just said. What if one of those sad pages that make us heart-sick is recorded the infamy of a Cleopatra, murdering her brother? Before we transfer to all who bear the name of sister the crime that "unsexed" the Egyptian princess, let us remember that there are faults that are the faults of the age; and that if a sister betrayed to death her brother, it was a brother whom the law and the custom commanded her to marry. As a king and a husband, not as a brother, he was sacrificed. We look not among the annals of a barbarous age, nor beneath the corrupt glitter of a court in any age, for examples of even the natural virtues of life. But in the mottled scenes of history every sacrifice for this sacred connection, every noble defence of a sister's life, every proud assertion of her dignity, every mark of regard for her safety and her happiness, meets the approval of all that is good in us; for it realizes at once the natural and the heroic, the honourable and the beautiful. And in the wide world of unwritten and unwitnessed goodness there are hourly recognitions of the strength of this bond, that do humanity honour and ennoble the heart;—so many testimonials to the sister's mysterious, spiritual influence.

What are the lessons that this teaching brings? Does the heart-reaching influence leave impressions worthy to be treasured?

There are features in the manly character which require to be chastened, asperities which need to be softened. The bold outline sometimes becomes painfully harsh. That which rightly distinguishes man, as man, is exaggerated till the intellectual symmetry is destroyed. The nobler characteristics are not less noble when harmonized, than when standing out pointedly and singly. Over the most rugged fortitude, daring, vigour, enterprise, there may be spread the charm of mildness, serenity, forbearance and love. To thus harmonize and refine, to inspire this Christian tenderness, to diffuse this charm, is the sister's constant, though almost imperceptible office. True politeness too she inculcates, by a perpetual instruction,—the politeness of manner and the politeness of the heart; that wide politeness that seeks, in every minutest circumstance, the pleasure, the convenience, the good of others, as paramount to our own; a politeness that warms into benevolence and expands into philanthropy. Under the same subdued discipline is recommended that purity that is the white robe of virtue, without which no being was ever honourable or lovely, which flees all that may contaminate, and looks to Jesus for its perfect manifestation. Nor is that generous emulation, which seeks knowledge for its own sake, without aid and encouragement from the same prompter to good. And especially are cultivated those finer emotions that seek delight in the beautiful creations of art,—in the inspired chant of the poet, the living representations of painting, the melody and the harmony of music. Perhaps too our tastes have been formed by her own; and the strains of her now silent voice and her forsaken harp yet ring in our ears, bringing back the pleasant yet mournful memories of one who has taken her station among the seraphim.

I have at times felt an emotion of something like pity for those whose journey has never been cheered by the light of a sister's spirit, who have never known a sister's sympathising affection. Yet they may not feel the want of what never has been theirs. To those who have possessed and lost, and to those who still hold the blessing, I am sure I do not speak words unfelt or strange. For there are others, who have begun life side by side with such a dear and deeply-loved companion; who have with her first looked, with half-understanding admiration, into the wide volume of the world's experience, of human destiny, of the deep things of wisdom and the holy things of revelation; whose eyes, with hers, have caught the gorgeous streakings of the sky and the changing glories of earth; and whose minds, with hers, have

been rapt away by the whole pageantry and mystery of nature. It may be that they will recall some such forming period in life—which they would not for the world suffer to be stricken out—when they have been almost awed, as I have been, with the earnestness and enthusiasm with which aspirations such as these have been repeated from a sister's lips, now sealed.

* O ye who nearer to yon vault are rolled,
Ye sparkling worlds, the truths ye know unfold!
More ye must know, as ye are purely bright,
Because of truth the eternal type is light!

And it may be that they, as well as I, have longed for some assurance of a realization of a promise like this;—

How oft, when standing on some lonely hill,
Where the free soul sublimer promptings fill,
Beautiful stars! empyreal flowers! whose hue
The drooping lily marks with jealous view,—
I've murmured low—Would I were one of you,
Were wafted from this earthly sphere away
To yon bright cope where rapt my glances stray,
With one more fire to strew the heavenly road,
Kindling at once beneath the steps of God!
Floating in that clear azure's limpid wave,
I'd still recall the globe my life that gave,
And steal each night, with lonely steps and slow,
To shine on mountains loved so well below!

If I have, possibly, been too unqualified in my conceptions of what a sister's influence is and should be, I am at least willing to be beguiled by so pleasing an illusion.

If thou art a sister, forget not the power thou hast for good to thy brother, and that with thee may rest the secret talisman, which if lost is lost forever.

Brother! yield thyself to all that is pure and holy, elevating and ennobling, in the ministry of a sister's love.

F. D. H.

* Lamartine's Meditations—"The Stars."

THE THREE CHRISTIAN WITNESSES.

A SERMON, BY REV. GEORGE E. ELLIS.

1 JOHN v. 8. And there are three that bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood; and these three agree in one.

THERE is too sublime a sentiment contained in these words to allow them to be yielded up entirely to the unfruitful strife of polemical theology. They are the testimonials adduced by John to support the authority of his Master. They contain no mystery—no unintelligible or absurd dogma. There may be, and indeed there without doubt is, a hidden meaning in the words which it requires searching to find out. It is the great characteristic of the writings of this Apostle, that his language is not only the expression of thought, but likewise an incentive to it. He abounds in deep and darkly shadowed truths, unseen by many eyes,—not because they are mysterious, but because they are spiritual. It is he, who records the saying of Jesus, “The words which I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.” So may we say of the words of the Apostle. He was of that frame of mind and of that susceptibility of heart which make their possessors habitually spiritual, able to see more of the essence of things than other men can, disposed to find and to utter truth in symbols, emblems and figures. His eyes were ever open to receive the knowledge of God and the testimony for his Son which nature and life afforded, and therefore when he records the deeds and sayings of his Master, he embodies them in some significant manifestation which shall speak to the hearts of all men. The descent of the Spirit of Love upon the Prince of Peace finds its emblem to his eye in the gentleness of the dove. He binds the Father in heaven, the faithful Redeemer, and the worthy disciple, all in one union of beauty and fertility, in the vine.

So it is with the sentiment in our text. One by one the witnesses of the Saviour present themselves before the mind of the beloved disciple, as the memory of the striking scenes in his life recurs to his thoughts. He had stood with his Master upon the banks of the Jordan; the Spirit had descended upon him; it was the Spirit of

adoption, and that bore witness to the Messiah. He had seen the water of Baptism upon his forehead; that was the seal of the renewing covenant; it bore witness to the Preacher of repentance. He had stood by the cross; and the flowing blood, which accompanied the prayer of pardon, attested the great Deliverer and bore witness to the Son of God. And these three agreed in one. Each and all attested the Desired and Expected of all nations as the Prophet of the Most High, the Preacher of righteousness, the willing Sacrifice for the redemption of men.

He that had seen it all bore record, and we know that the record is true. But the words which John committed to writing were thought to speak in some way of the nature and personality of God. The preceding verse, as we read it in our common Bibles, conveys to some minds the idea of a plurality and yet a unity in the Divine nature. Even on the supposition of its genuineness no such idea can be supported by it. But we know that the Apostle never wrote it. It was introduced, without any bad design, as a gloss upon the words of our text in the margin of some early Latin manuscript, and about the middle of the 16th century—and not till then—it obtained the place which it now retains in the Epistle of John, though the best critics of all names deny its claim to authority as a part of the sacred Scriptures.

To return to the words of our text; I have said that John there adduces three symbols, founded upon the prominent scenes in the Saviour's history, as the witnesses for his heavenly character.

It will be no improper use of the words to take them from the Master and apply them reverently to every worthy disciple. In this manner then I would now use the witnesses of the Saviour's truth, to express the three great traits of the Christian character.

The Spirit, the Water, and the Blood—Spirituality, Purity, and Sacrifice: the Master taught them and exhibited them—they were his witnesses; the disciple likewise should have their testimony.

I. In the first place, "the Spirit beareth witness"—the life of the inward man—the action of the soul. This is the first seal of Christian discipleship and character. All by natural birth are men, and it is by spiritual birth alone that all can become Christians.

"Born of the Spirit!" how is the divine significance of this phrase restricted, even by some of those who think to comprehend in it unfathomable mysteries. They who claim for it a meaning which in their view is the most lofty seem not to regard it in all its vast extent.

It is a birth into a world where wisdom is taught in sounds which before were unheard. It is an opening of the eyes of man to visions which before were unseen. Nor does the birth of the Spirit introduce us only into a new world; but it likewise invests us with new senses and new faculties. Desires which before never prompted us now crave for satisfaction. Truly is it an awakening to a deep consciousness of the distinctive attributes of humanity—knowledge and virtue. “For knowledge is not a property of man’s mouldering flesh, neither is virtue inherent in his bones,” but it is the Spirit which quickeneth. It is this which giveth their true life to the mental faculties. There is a connection, however it may be disputed, between religion and all wisdom. Renewed by the Spirit, we walk abroad amidst the works of God, discerning him every where. We keep ever with us the consciousness that we see not the whole—that in life are purposes which it requires deep thought to discover—that the Providence of God is ever teaching us lessons which it is possible for us, with spiritual faculties unawake, to pass unnoticed. But if the action of the Spirit be not needful to the attainment of knowledge, it must be with it to sanctify it. It is the Christian’s first exercise of his divine life, to use his powers in arriving at the knowledge of God,—in searching out that all-connecting thread which binds the workmanship of God in relations and mutual dependencies, and then to follow it from his own heart until it guide him to the Father. Whatever then in the outward world appears to his senses will be *interpreted* so that it may teach some truth. This truth so obtained will sanctify the heart. It will prove to man the certainty of that conviction which some men hold as a dream, that God is very near to us—that we are never free from his immediate presence.

“The witness of the Spirit” is the action of the spiritual faculties, or faith—an unseen witness. To each individual it unfolds its own testimony. Others know it not, but to himself it will ever affirm or deny his Christian name. “Believest thou,” is the question of the Saviour to all who ask to partake of his calling; the answer to it will be to each one a saving or a condemning testimony. And yet this witness, which is to be heard only in the innermost recesses of the human heart, is oftentimes thought to be committed to creeds. Men seek for it out of themselves, and know not that it is the nearest reality of their existence. Nor is it needful to define the moment of time when each of God’s children, regenerated anew by his Spirit, first

learns to live by faith. To all it must be an epoch in existence, and yet not necessarily a change. For God is sometimes pleased to begin his work upon the first dawning faculties of the infant heart, and to carry it on by such constant impulses, that that heart shall never have memory of a time when faith and love were not enshrined there. With the multitude of men however it is different. They can point to the time when the spiritual life seemed first to be awakened by the birth of the Spirit, when they first had its testimony teaching them the presence of God in their souls. Without this inborn life they may live; yes, and think to know something of God and to share the promises of his Son. But they are deceived. The flame of devotion has no constant supply, the efforts of the soul unrenewed are faltering, when faith is not born to its undying life and the objects of its confidence are not felt to be as stable as the power of God.

This first witness of the Christian calling is then an awakening to a consciousness of our spiritual nature, and an action of its faculties. When we are thus able to find subjects of thought and means of happiness and improvement in unseen realities, then do we have the testimony of the Spirit. In what fulness of unmeasured glory did it bear witness to the Son of God! There was not an hour in his most crowded life when it did not testify to the beloved of the Father. In the midnight prayer upon the lonely mountain, in the hours of his spirit's agony when heavenly resignation alone could bear the cup of sorrow to his willing lips, then did it surely testify for him, for God could not then forsake him. But not only then. He must have had hours of elevated happiness as well as of sore trial, and then too did the Spirit testify, for it shed abroad a joy in his heart which was full of heaven. It was with him as the constant blessing of God—the angel charged to bear him up—the inward well of life-giving waters. As the disciple imitates the Master, so shall he have the witness of the Spirit.

II. In the second place, there is the witness of purification,—the inward sanctity, of which Baptism by water is the outward emblem.

Various have been the opinions, which since the Saviour's time have divided his professed disciples on the significance of this rite. In the dispute for forms the spirit has well nigh been sacrificed.

The first Emperor who is honoured with the name of Christian reserved this rite as the atoning service at his death-bed. Since his day the superstition, or I should rather say the self-delusion, of many

professed Christians has repeated it often as a sufficient means for removing the added burdens of sin and for quieting a guilty conscience. To such examples we must deny even the redeeming merit of sincerity. When the religion of the heart was first preached by the Saviour and his immediate Apostles, it was fitting that those who could then embrace it only by divesting themselves of the corrupting or deadening influence of their former tenets, should signify the renewal of their hearts and minds by an outward emblem. Such was then its meaning. And now, when the forehead of the unconscious infant is sprinkled at the public or the private altar, the pure water is still a fitting emblem of innocence, and a worthy testimonial of the sacred vows of the parents to make it the shield of the growing soul which is committed to their care.

As the second attestation adduced by John for the Saviour, I have already said, that it was hallowed in the memory of the disciple by the sight of his Master's baptism upon the banks of the Jordan. It then bore witness to the Preacher of repentance—of inward purity. It was his attestation as the Divinely appointed messenger of God, to make known to man what was not known before—that there was an offering more acceptable to God than sacrifice—that purity of heart was the only evidence of its renewal. Another witness has he furnished by which every worthy disciple may know his Christian calling. Again is the testimony uttered within; a saving testimony to each one who has given to God his heart, though others may uncharitably deny his claims; and a sentence of condemnation to many who wear the garb of sanctity—the form of godliness, while they deny its power. Would we know whether we rightfully bear the name of Christians? We cannot ask a question to which there is a more easy answer. We need not seek it in the heaven nor in the depths. The word is nigh to us, even in our own hearts. There is the altar, there are the offerings. Are they consecrated to God or to the world? Is there enshrined there a holy reverence for purity? Do we cherish there an unyielding resolution that the spirit shall triumph over the flesh? Then have we the witness of our hearts. Who can be deceived in this testimony? Human standards of holiness are insufficient, the sentence even of the nearest friend may deceive us, but we cannot be self-deceived if we are sincere in our self-examination. The motives which fill the human breast are mingled from manifold sources. Most easily are our ruling passions concealed from others,

most strangely are they oftentimes mistaken by ourselves. How narrow is the line of separation between a mean and a slavish earthliness and a godlike virtue. How confused are the thousand springs of deceitfulness and of heavenly grace and purity. Confused—must we say? No, they are not confused. Heaven and earth are not more widely separated. Never in the deepest dream of pleasure, never beneath a garb of saintly purity or brazen hypocrisy, has the stern censure of the soul been concealed. We may call the bitter sweet, but we cannot make it so. Let us realize the thought, for it is as true and unyielding as the Rock of Ages—it is one of the statutes of God's judgement for each human soul, that nothing but a deep-laid purity in the heart can ever bear the fruit of virtue. This is the unerring standard whose testimony will pronounce us to be either the servants of sin or the sons of God. Two masters we cannot serve. The witness of a pure heart is itself the seal of all those motives and hopes by which the Christian is guided. All holy thoughts and purposes cluster around its sacred presence. By it the affections choose their objects and measure their attachments. And while this inward calm and peace attends it, its outward influences are the same in their evidence for Christian truth. All that shares the same spirit is revealed to it. It is the light by which the soul ever discovers the elements of its true nutriment and growth. In the want of its sure guidance Nicodemus sought Jesus by night, and though he conversed with him yet knew him not; but prompted by its impulse the beloved disciple knew his Lord afar off. Such was the second witness of the Saviour, and such must be the second testimony for the disciple.

III. There is the third and last witness to the discipleship of those whose Master endured the cross; it is that seal of faithfulness which is found in sacrifice. And what was his testimony from the cross? It was the triumph of truth in opposition—the superiority of virtue to outward circumstance. The cross upon mount Calvary was indeed the Saviour's crowning sacrifice, but it was not his only cross, nor his only sacrifice. It is from an error on this point, that so many professed disciples whilst seeking for themselves the third testimony of the Christian have mistaken self-inflicted bodily mortifications for self-denial, and mere obstinacy of will for determination of heart. There have been resolute champions of the truth—yes, persecuted in its cause, and martyrs in its attestation—who yet have died without this witness. And there is the error. For self-denial is by no means

the sole purpose of the mind which leads to a suffering life and a painful death. We shall have a most unworthy opinion of the Saviour's cross if we restrict its suffering to the mount of crucifixion. That was indeed the issue of his mortal life—its awful, its sublime close ; but the temptations and the agonies which preceded it were a trial of his truth immeasurably greater. He died a witness, fulfilling the end of his birth and life, reproached, insulted, and crucified. But he lived also as a witness—a suffering witness. As the hour of his last agony drew near, angels visited him to sustain him ; the suffering through which he was to pass was intense ; but it must be brief. And then he beheld the glory into which he was soon to enter. He knew—and rich was that knowledge in comfort to his soul—that God would even then deliver him. The last conflict then was relieved by hope and visions of glory. But these were not so near to mitigate the sacrifices of his life, which was full of sorer trials for his virtue. At the beginning of his ministry the kingdoms of this world with all their glory were within his reach ; could the choice of poverty have been made without a conflict ? Before Pontius Pilate he witnessed a good confession ; and again did he endure a willing sacrifice. He was borne along in triumph amid the hosannas of the multitude ; hard must have been the struggle which exchanged those shouts of joy for the thirsting for his blood. In these trials he never faltered, for truth required the resolute devotion of its Teacher. And yet when duty permitted it, he withdrew and concealed himself from the stones of the populace and sought for the pleasures of social intercourse.

Let the disciple then learn a lesson from his Master—that asceticism and suffering are by no means the noblest sacrifices, and that the cross which he is to bear is his burden in life as well as in death. The same mind is to be in us as was in Christ Jesus. It may be that the kindness which rules our individual lot may not require one striking manifestation of it, but the mind must ever be within us, if we would have the Christian's witness. The performance of duty is ever attended with some trial, and the spirit of sacrifice is the spirit by which the Christian determines to perform that duty. It is ever a present consciousness that there must be a strife between our higher and lower natures, and that the former must never suffer a defeat, though it triumphs only at the ruin of the latter. Life is the great field for that conflict. To every man the trial comes in its own peculiar form. In every circumstance which calls for the action of our

moral faculties, in personal or relative obligations, there is a call for faithfulness against opposition—yes, even unto death; and obedience to that call is the spirit of sacrifice—the third Christian witness. Man's duty is to make himself wise and good, and he must fulfil it though wisdom cost him pains, and virtue sacrifices. Without this trial he will not know his own nature nor realize the enjoyment which follows upon conscientious self-devotion. It was by the suffering of his cross that the Saviour triumphed; neither its ignominy nor its pain can be ours, but we can have the resolution and the spirit which endured it. We must show forth the Lord's death, in our own bodies and in our own hearts, if we would be the disciples of him to whom the blood bore witness.

Such are the three tests of Christian discipleship, founded on the spiritual capacities, the moral duties, and the probationary trials of humanity;—to walk with God,—to be faithful to his commandments,—to be resigned unto his will.

“And these three agree in one.” It is their according testimony, their harmonious union, which bears witness to the “perfect man in Christ Jesus.” Spirituality, purity, and sacrifice—their united and proportioned manifestations attested the Son of God as the approved Teacher and Example of men. There have been philosophers and religious teachers who have taught and exemplified some one of these great traits; but often have they magnified one duty at the expense of others, and sought to exalt one virtue over the rest. Therefore have they failed in making known to men the elements of a perfect character. There has been the solitary mystic musing upon the ways of the Spirit, and he has contended with the scrupulous observer of rites and outward purifications, and both have united against the common enemy who taking his sole lesson from the cross seeks for his witness in bodily mortifications. The testimony of one witness each may obtain and may still be wanting in the spiritual vision, the inward purity, or the resolution of soul which belong alike to the Christian. By prayer and conscientious effort and faithful perseverance all may be obtained, and then shall we have the testimony of our consciences and the final approbation of our God.

THE DISCOVERY OF PRINTING,

AND ITS INFLUENCE ON THE DIFFUSION OF CHRISTIANITY.

The four-hundredth anniversary of the discovery of the art of Printing has recently been celebrated, both in our own country and in Europe. We are still looking with interest for the accounts of the commemoration in Leipsic, Vienna, and other cities of Germany, where, as the places of its origin or of its earliest progress, the event was anticipated with the highest satisfaction and extensive preparations were made.

The history of the discovery itself is identified with the history of learning, and specially with the progress of the Reformation; which, we may venture to assert, could not have been carried on without it. In common with those discoveries, which have proved of most importance to the interests of mankind, it leaves unquestionable tokens, alike in its origin and its issue, of an over-ruling Providence. Whatever questions may arise—and many have arisen—as to the individual or individuals to whom the honor of the invention belongs, or as to the precise date we are to assign to it, this at least is evident, that many subordinate causes were in operation to hasten, if not actually to produce the event. Of these may be mentioned the enormous price of manuscripts, putting them beyond the reach of any but the rich and noble, and the cupidity combined with the shameless impositions of transcribers—a profession of men as indispensable before the art was invented, as they were jealous of it afterwards. Even princes and nobles, whose resources were most ample, became impatient of exactions, which, if they would have books, they could neither escape nor punish; while scholars without wealth were led to inquire, by what other means they could become possessors of treasures indispensable to their calling, and to which they seemed naturally to hold claim.

The date of this discovery, which, if we embrace all diversities of speculation concerning it, may be placed between the years 1423 and 1445—the former being the earliest and the latter the latest period assigned—coincides with the revival of learning, and with the end of those “times of ignorance” emphatically distinguished as the dark

ages. "The world," says a learned historian of the art, "began to recover from a state of ignorance, under which it had labored many centuries. Learning revived, and was patronized in almost every country in Europe. Its votaries exerted a laudable zeal in searching the libraries for those valuable books which had been buried in obscurity, and had become extremely scarce, great numbers having been lost in the preceding times of darkness."

Of the scarcity and exorbitant prices of manuscripts, which quickened the zeal of scholars to devise, if possible, some methods of relief, many curious instances might be adduced. We are left to admiration at the various attainments of the ancient writers, the historians, orators and philosophers, Grecian and Roman, when we consider their difficulties in obtaining books, and the enormous sums which they frequently gave for them. In Middleton's *Life of Cicero* we are told, that both he and his friend Atticus were celebrated in their own times for their costly purchases of books. And when, by indulging in this expensive luxury to some excess Atticus was straitened, and compelled to dispose of a part of his library, Cicero begs him to wait till he himself could raise money enough for the purchase. "Pray keep your books," said he, "for me, and do not despair of my being able in time to make them mine. I am setting apart my rents to purchase that solace for my old age; which if I can compass, I shall think myself richer than Cræsus, and despise the fine villas and gardens of them all. So pray take care, that you do not part with your library to any man, how eager soever he may be to buy it."

Galen writes, "that Ptolemeus Philadelphus gave to the Athenians fifteen talents, that is, according to the lowest computation of the talent, 13,200 dollars, with exemption from all taxes and a great convoy of provisions, for the autographs, or original manuscripts, of the Tragedies of Æschylus, Sophocles and Euripides."

One-hundred and twenty golden crowns for a Livy, and eighty crowns for three volumes of Plutarch's Lives, were deemed a moderate price. A few manuscripts were a marriage portion worthy of a nobleman's daughter; and one or two were sufficient in later times to entitle both the donor and his posterity to the prayers of a monastery. Perpetual masses were offered for their souls. We find kings and emperors not disdaining to employ their interest and wealth to procure books for their learned friends. An eminent scholar of his day thus writes to Alphonso, King of Naples: "I entreat your Majesty, that

you would have purchased for me a copy of Livy, which we have been accustomed to call the "Prince of books," and in the mean time I will provide the necessary funds."

Such was the value of some single manuscripts, that by the sale of them great debts were discharged, and even princes relieved of their embarrassments. Paulus Jovius relates a pleasant story of a rich nobleman, a student of Pavia, whose extravagance had brought him to a goal, but by depositing a manuscript (Codex Juris,) on parchment in the hands of a usurer he obtained his liberty. And again, the instructor of Petrarch in rhetoric, whose name for the very reason is not mentioned, saved himself from a prison by pledging two volumes of Cicero.

An old manuscript Bible was considered as a suitable present from Frederick Thud, an Emperor of Germany, to Rouchlin, himself of noble birth and sent as an ambassador to his court.

The excessive price of books tempted some to purchase estates by the sale of their libraries, exchanging the means of learning for money; while many of the learned on the other hand freely parted with their wealth, and often submitted to great personal and domestic sacrifices to procure them. "One thing I want to know of your prudence," writes a scholar to the King of Naples who consented to be an agent for the purchase of a book, "whether I or Poggius have done best? He, *that he might buy a country-house near Florence, sold a Livy*, which he had written in a fair hand; and I, to purchase the Livy, have exposed a piece of land to sale." Many other curious examples might be adduced to show the great value of manuscripts. In France, as well as in Italy, large sums were demanded for manuscripts. Gaquin thus writes to a friend, who had commissioned him to purchase a Concordance. "I have not to this day found a copy, excepting one greatly esteemed, which the bookseller tells me may be had for a hundred crowns of gold," i. e. about £82, or nearly \$370. Nor can such prices be regarded as exorbitant, when we consider the time and labor which were sometimes expended on manuscripts. Fifty years was not an unusual term to be employed upon a single volume. There was a manuscript Bible on vellum, beautifully written with a pen, and splendidly illuminated, which its transcriber, Guido de Jars, commenced in his fortieth, and did not finish till he had completed his ninetieth year. No wonder that books of such value should have been conveyed, as is told of some, by deeds and notaries, like real estate.

The transcribers had, with this excessive demand for manuscripts, favorable opportunities for enriching themselves, "which," says Hansard in his copious History of Printing, "they might have enjoyed longer, had they not madly sacrificed their own interests by their impositions and extortions. Equally by their carelessness in transcribing, and their dishonesty in corrupting the text of some of the best authors, they did an incredible, and in not a few instances an irreparable, injury to learning. Hence the complaints which were loudly uttered against their ignorance, or their carelessness, or their frauds; hence the countless various readings, especially of the ancient classics, which have cost the learned so much conjecture and so much trouble.

But such abuses could not long be tolerated, nor were they in the result without their benefit. The rapacity, or dishonesty, or carelessness of a small class excited a general odium. Indignation against transcribers, with a reviving zeal for learning, quickened invention, and though they could not originate, they unquestionably accelerated the discovery of the art of Printing. And thus it was in the disposing Providence of God that evil was turned to good, and the errors of a few became tributary to the advancement of the race.

There are various views in which we may consider the influence of this great discovery. It introduced an instant change in the intellectual and moral condition of man, and in the prospects of the world. In whatever light it is contemplated, it opens a fruitful subject for reflection. But it is only in its influence on the diffusion of Christianity, and the progress of the Reformation that we can here regard it. As the great helper of the latter, without which all the learning and eloquence of Luther and his associates must have failed of any permanent effect, it of course excited the opposition of the adherents to Rome. The monks from the beginning were its inveterate opposers: and a certain zealous Vicar of Croydon in a flaming harangue uttered at St. Paul's Cross said, "We must put down printing, or printing will put down us." Happily, it was not the monks who were destined to succeed in this case. Their failure, however, was not from want of zeal. When it was first proposed to publish the Scriptures in the original, they declared from their pulpits, "*that there was a new language discovered, called Greek, of which people should be aware, because that it produced all the heresies; that in this language had come forth a book, called the New-Testament which was to be put in every body's hands, and which was full of thorns and briars.*"

And of the Old Testament they said, "there was *another language now started up, which they called Hebrew, and that they who learned it were all turned Hebrews.*"

Even as late as 1534, almost a century after, the great Erasmus found cause to complain, that one of the Colleges of his favourite University of Cambridge forbade the use of the New Testament in the original language. "They talk," says he, "of the great peril of the Christian faith, and the danger to the Church, which *they* pretend to support with their shoulders who are fitter to prop a wagon:" and he then quotes with contempt the ignorant discourse of that Vicar of Croydon, to whom we have just referred.

Nor was there occasion for surprise at the hostility of the Church of Rome or of her Priesthood to the progress of this noble art. They saw in it but too clearly the ruin of that whole system of ignorance and superstition on the one hand, and of spiritual tyranny on the other, which for centuries they had been building up. They saw, with a sagacity ever quickened by an intense pursuit of a personal interest, that with the multiplication of books there must be diffusion of knowledge; and that diffusion of knowledge would be fatal alike to their faith and to their power. Their craft was in truth in great danger of being set at nought. The press in union with the pulpit, but with a far wider power, exposed the errors of Popery, and turned men from superstition or unbelief to the knowledge and faith of Christ Jesus. Of the various influences resulting from this discovery alone on the religious condition of the world, it would be vain within a shorter compass than a volume to attempt the description. They have become so familiar moreover, and identified, as it were, with our spiritual being, that like the most common blessings, the light of heaven, the air we breathe, or the bread that sustains us, we can scarcely judge of their value, but in imagining or suffering their loss. Yet believing, as Protestants must, in the inestimable value of the Scriptures as the only unerring standard of faith and duty, we have but to contrast the condition of Christendom before and after this discovery, to obtain some just estimate of its importance. We have only to consider, that for a single copy of the Bible in manuscript more was demanded than would now suffice for the purchase of a whole library; and compare this with the wide diffusion of the Scriptures at the present day, not only through the Christian world, but among the very poorest and humblest of mankind. We have but to

contrast the small number of manuscripts, in which alone the Scriptures then existed, and these for the most part slumbering in monasteries, in the custody of priests many of whom could not even read them, with the millions and millions of copies that since the Reformation have been distributed over the earth. Nay, looking only to the commencement of the nineteenth century, we need but take with us the single fact, that within less than the forty years which have elapsed since its establishment the British and Foreign Bible Society alone has, by its own direct instrumentality or its patronage of similar institutions, circulated nineteen millions of copies of the Old and New Testament; and caused the Scriptures in whole or in part to be translated into one hundred and thirty-six languages, besides being engaged at this moment in the preparation of eighteen more;—and we may form some adequate conception of the importance of Printing to the diffusion of Christianity; and see reason to adore alike the wisdom and the benevolence of God in making the inventions of genius and the progress of human art the ministry of spiritual light and salvation to his children.*

F. P.

* Note. To whom belongs the honour of the invention of Printing, it is not easy to declare. "The controversy," observes the learned and candid historian of the art, "has turned, like many other controversies, rather on words than facts. If we estimate the discovery from the *invention of the principle*, the honour is unquestionably due to Laurence Coster, who first found out the method of impressing characters on paper by means of carved blocks of wood; or, secondly, if moveable types be considered the criterion, the merit of that discovery is due to John Guttemberg of Mentz; while Faust was the first, in conjunction with Schoeffer, to whom he was a liberal patron, who founded types of metal. So that to Guttemberg is due the high appellation of Father of Printing, as first suggesting the principle; to Schoeffer, that of Father of letter printing; and to Faust, that of the generous patron, by whose means this preserver of the arts, this effectual promoter of religion, was brought so rapidly to perfection."

Printing was first introduced into Great Britain by William Caxton about 1471. And it is a curious fact, that Westminster Abbey was the first printing-office in England. An enlightened Abbot of Westminster, Thomas Millington,—honoured be his memory—devoted a chapel in that venerable edifice to this sacred purpose. Therefore it is, that Mc'Creery in his poem, called "The Press," writes

"Each printer hence, howe'er unblest his walls,
E'en to this day his shop a chapel calls."

NICOLL'S POEMS.

We think our readers will not be sorry to see some further extracts from the little volume which was noticed in the Miscellany for June—Vol. II. pp. 312-316.

GOD IS EVERYWHERE.

A trodden daisy, from the sward,
With tearful eye I took,
And on its ruin'd glories I,
With moving heart, did look ;
For, crush'd and broken as it was,
That little flower was fair ;
And oh ! I loved the dying bud,
For God was there !

I stood upon a sea-beat shore—
The waves came rushing on ;
The tempest raged in giant wrath—
The light of day was gone ;
The sailor, from his drowning bark,
Sent up his dying prayer ;
I look'd, amid the merciless storm,
And God was there !

I sought a lonely, woody dell,
Where all things soft and sweet—
Birds, flowers, and trees, and running streams—
'Mid bright sunshine did meet ;
I stood beneath an old oak's shade,
And summer round was fair ;
I gazed upon the peaceful scene,
And God was there !

I saw a home—a happy home—
Upon a bridal day,
And youthful hearts were blithesome there,
And aged hearts were gay ;
I sat amid the smiling band,
Where all so blissful were—

Among the bridal maidens sweet—
And God was there !

I stood beside an infant's couch,
When light had left its eye ;
I saw the mother's bitter tears,
I heard her woful cry ;
I saw her kiss its fair pale face,
And smooth its yellow hair ;
And oh ! I loved the mourner's home,
For God was there !

I sought a cheerless wilderness—
A desert, pathless, wild—
Where verdure grew not by the streams,
Where beauty never smiled,
Where desolation brooded o'er
A muirland lone and bare ;
And awe upon my spirit crept,
For God was there !

I look'd upon the lonely flower,
And on each blade of grass—
Upon the forests, wide and deep ;
I saw the tempests pass ;
I gazed on all created things
In earth, in sea, in air ;
Then bent the knee—for God in Love
Was everywhere !

THE BURSTING OF THE CHAIN.

AN ANTHEM FOR THE THIRD CENTENARY OF THE REFORMATION.

An offering to the shrine of Power
Our hands shall never bring—
A garland on the ear of Pomp
Our hands shall never fling—
Applauding in the Conqueror's path
Our voices ne'er shall be ;
But we have hearts to honor those
Who bade the world go free !

Stern Ignorance man's soul had bound
 In fetters, rusted o'er
 With tears—with scalding human tears—
 And red with human gore ;
 But Men arose—the Men to whom
 We bend the freeman's knee—
 Who, God-encouraged, burst the chain,
 And made our fathers free !

Light dwelt where Darkness erst had been,
 The morn of Mind arose—
 The dawning of that day of Love
 Which never more shall close ;
 Joy grew more joyful, and more green
 The valley and the lea,—
 The glorious sun from heaven look'd down,
 And smiled upon the free !

Truth came, and made its home below ;
 And Universal Love,
 And Brotherhood, and Peace, and Joy,
 Are following from above ;
 And happy ages on the earth
 Humanity shall see ;
 And happy lips shall bless their names,
 Who made our children free !

Praise to the Good—the Pure—the Great—
 Who made us what we are !
 Who lit the flame which yet shall glow
 With radiance brighter far :—
 Glory to them in coming time,
 And through eternity !
 They burst the Captive's galling chain,
 And bade the world go free !

WE'LL MAK' THE WARLD BETTER YET.

The braw fouk crush the puir fouk down,
 An' bluid an' tears are rinnin' het ;
 An' muckle ill, an' muckle wae,
 We a' upo' the earth ha'e met.
 An' Falsehood aft comes bauldly forth,

An' on the throne o' Truth doth sit ;
 But true hearts a,' gae work awa'—
 We'll mak' the warld better yet !

Though Superstition, hand in hand
 Wi' Prejudice—that gruesome hag—
 Gangs linkin still ; though Misers mak'
 Their heaven o' a siller bag ;
 Though Ignorance, wi' bluidy hand,
 Is tryin' Slavery's bonds to knit ;
 Put knee to knee, ye bauld an' free—
 We'll mak' the warld better yet !

See yonder coof who becks an' boos
 To yonder fule wha's ca'd a lord :
 See yonder gowd-bedizen'd wight—
 Yon fopling o' the bluidless sword :
 Baith slave, an' lord, an' soldier too,
 Maun honest grow or quickly flit ;
 For freemen a', baith grit and sma',—
 We'll mak' the warld better yet !

Yon dreamer tells us o' a land
 He frae his airy brain hath made—
 A land whare Truth and Honesty
 Ha'e crush'd the serpent Falsehood's head ;
 But by the names o' Love an' Joy,
 An' Common-sense, an' Lear, an' Wit,
 Put back to back—an' in a crack
 We'll mak' *our* warld better yet !

The Knaves an' Fules may rage an' storm,
 The growling Bigot may deride,
 The tremblin' Slave awa' may rin,
 An' in his Tyrant's dungeon hide ;
 But Free an' Bauld, an' True an' Gude,
 Unto this aith their seal ha'e set—
 "Frae pole to pole we'll free ilk soul,
 The warld *shall* be better yet !"

FEMALE AUTHORSHIP.

ABOUT the time that Philenia* began to publish in the magazines, another Philenia made her appearance. They seem to have come forward together, as both happened on the same signature. This perplexing matter was happily adjusted by Mrs. Murray's adding Constantia to Philenia, which afterwards designated her from the other Philenia.

Though Constantia made her first debut in poetry, she soon quitted the nurture of the Muses for more solid fare, and became a periodical prose writer in the "Massachusetts Magazine." The essays which she there furnished she afterwards collected and published, with large additions, under the title of "The Gleaner." It will be unnecessary to quote from this work, as it may be easily procured. It vouches for her industry. The most popular periodical writers who published works of yore, such as the Guardian, Spectator, Tattler, Adventurer &c. received much assistance from their contemporaries. Addison was aided by the brightest wits of his time, his imagination and ingenuity exercised by their suggestions and piquant letters; but our Constantia stood alone on this bleak and barren coast of literature, and issued her three volumes of the Gleaner in triumph. She was a most kind-hearted, benevolent lady, preserving the urbanity and politeness of the old school, with an enthusiastic desire for literary fame.

Mrs. Warren's History of the American Revolution and Miss Adams's excellent and useful works are all attainable and need no comments. Leaving this meagre account of the early female authors, we shall make some general remarks. The want of education for many years excluded women from literary pursuits. Miss Adams, in her little memoir of her early struggles and difficulties says, girls were merely taught to read, write and spell, imperfectly. In England, if we may judge from the periodical writers before mentioned, there was the same neglect of female education. Their works contain many severe strictures on modes of dress, fondness for card-playing, and the unbecoming party-feeling which seems to have prevailed among the fair sex, but there are rarely any hints given for their

* See Monthly Miscellany, Vol. III. p. 10.

intellectual progress. The *Guardian* has a few papers on the subject, and very sensibly observes, "Learning and knowledge are perfections in us, not as we are men, but as we are reasonable creatures, in which order of beings the female world is upon the same level with the male. We ought to consider in this particular not what is the sex, but what is the species to which they belong." The writer then adds another reason, why "learning ought to be an ingredient in the education of a woman of quality, and why they should apply themselves to letters, namely, because their husbands are generally strangers to them." The motive he offers them for improving their minds is not of the most elevated kind—"Several of the fair sex have by so doing raised themselves to high posts of honour and fortune;" and he concludes with a story of the Emperor Theodosius who raised Athenais to his throne for her cultivation and learning.

Addison says, "the general mistake in educating our children is, that in our daughters we take care of their persons and neglect their minds; in our sons we are so intent upon adorning their minds, that we wholly neglect their manners." He gives an amusing account of a lady's library, to which he gained access in her absence; part of it we shall quote. "At the end of the folios, which were finely bound and gilt, were great jars of china placed one above another in a very noble piece of architecture. The quartos were separated from the octavos by a pile of smaller vessels, which rose in a delightful pyramid. The octavos were bounded by tea-dishes of all sizes, shapes and colours, and so disposed that they looked like one continued pillar, indented with the finest strokes of sculpture and stained with the greatest variety of dyes. The pamphlets were placed in an enclosure of lions, monkeys, mandarines, trees, shells and grotesque figures in China ware. On the table was a snuff-box made to look like a book, and on the upper shelves elegant books carved in wood. Among the real books were 'Locke on the Human Understanding,' with a paper of patches in it; a spelling book and dictionary for the explanation of hard words; 'Sherlock upon Death,' next to 'The Fifteen Comforts of Matrimony;' 'The Academy of Compliments;' A Prayer Book, with a bottle of Hungary water by the side of it; 'Taylor's 'Holy Living,' and 'Dying,' elegantly bound, to match La Ferte's 'Instruction for Country Dances;' all the classic authors, splendidly carved in wood."

We can hardly persuade ourselves that this account of female literature comes from a kingdom whose united realms have since given

birth to an Edgeworth, More, Baillie, Grant, and countless other authoresses, who have instructed us by their wisdom, charmed us by their eloquence, and been to their transatlantic sisters a pillar of fire in the darkness of their night. At this period of society it would be unnecessary to advocate the importance of female education; we believe no one doubts it. Literary men think it no degradation to devote their lives to this object, and every city has its favourite seminaries. Perhaps it is not unfair to attribute some influence to fashion; it is the fashion of the age to be accomplished. The rich treasures of the South are tributary to the once barren regions of the North; Dante and Tasso have become familiar, Spanish literature is unlocking its stores, and many have engaged in the arduous study of the German language. An instructor however can do but little more than conduct his pupil to the threshold of science and give her a ticket of admission. The work of true education remains for herself to accomplish, to apply to its best end what she has acquired, and not only enlarge her sphere of usefulness, but multiply her enjoyments. Like the fabled Dryads of old, she may become related to every thing around her, and study the book of nature with the eye of inspiration.

It is sometimes said, that a woman who performs her domestic duties has no time for self-culture; but Providence bountifully supplies the time and the means. They go hand in hand. Every new situation, every new responsibility speaks to the reflecting mind as with the tongue of an angel. The heart is softened by sorrow, expanded by joy, strengthened by adversity, humbled by temptation, and elevated by mercy. Who shall say that a mistress of a family has no time for improvement, when life with its multiplied relations is her school, and God her teacher! The accomplishments, or more justly speaking the acquirements, of early years ought to be the resource of later ones. A mind well prepared by judicious instruction will be always adding to its stock of knowledge, and the less time a woman may have for reading, the more important will be to her her early education.

We are aware that often a disheartening feeling comes over the mistress of a family, as the numerous and petty cares of life throng around her. Against this she must exert her moral resolution, and remember that her path is onward to the perfect day, that every duty rightly fulfilled, every self-denying action and disinterested sacrifice, is helping her forward, and that the good she is thus communicating

is of the highest order. We began with female authorship, and we shall close with it. Education is undoubtedly necessary to qualify women to become authors, and perhaps it is from their increased advantages that the class has multiplied. Many females have leisure to write without neglecting any domestic duty. It is earnestly to be wished that they may do so, in as quiet and humble a spirit as they perform their domestic duties and with a sense of fervent and devout responsibility. Genius is the gift of few, but the earnest desire of contributing to the improvement, virtue and happiness of their fellow-beings can never be wholly thrown away. The heart that is filled with human sympathies will find answering sympathies, and be blessed in what it gives and in what it calls forth.

H. F. L.

THOUGHTS ON REVIVALS.

At the present period much is said and written respecting revivals of religion, and the question is often asked by those of other sects, and asked in a manner which shows it to be to them an incontrovertible proof of the falseness and deadness of our system of belief,—“Why do we never hear of revivals of religion among Unitarians?”

By a revival of religion, we understand them to mean an unusual excitement and interest in religious concerns. It is true that as a body Unitarians have generally disapproved of the machinery of revivals, as they have often been conducted, for they have considered them as tending to nourish delusion and spiritual pride, and to render the religious feeling of a community dependant in a great degree upon external excitement. But a revival of real heart-purifying religion Unitarians have never disapproved; on the contrary, their most earnest desire is that genuine, undefiled religion should be to a far greater extent revived in the hearts of men.

Opposing sects imbibe one prejudice against Unitarians from the circumstance, that they speak of religion in the usual language of ordinary life. Many expressions in current use among other sects they think inappropriate, and calculated to mislead the mind. Of this class of expressions is the phrase, “experience of religion.” “Unitarians,” it is said, “do not believe in a change of heart; they never

speak of having experienced religion." In the words of a deceased clergyman of our denomination we would reply, "This expression, 'experience of religion,' is applying to one part of religion that which was intended for the whole." What is experimental religion? Unitarians believe it to consist in the surrender of the whole heart and life to God with full purposes of obedience; a firm faith in Christ, as the Messiah, and as a Saviour able and willing to save to the uttermost all who come to God by him, as a Mediator and Intercessor, as our Master and Exemplar; in short, a belief in him as most truly "the way, the truth, and the life;" together with a strong trust in, and dependance for aid on, the spiritual influences which are promised to those who seek aright for them. We are converted, whenever a change from an animal and earthly to a moral and spiritual existence takes place in our hearts. But can this period, when the soul first becomes conscious of reconciliation with God and the hope of pardon, and acceptance dawns on the heart which has truly repented of sin, be rightly denominated the experience of religion, as if it were the sole experience of the Christian? It must be the *commencement* of religious experience, but we think the expression as commonly used would with more propriety apply to the whole life of a Christian; for if faithful to the principles of Christianity, every day and every hour will add to our experience of the truth and power of religion.

We believe that conversion may be sudden; indeed there must be some moment when the worldly vanities of life are relinquished for the service of God. But to be certain that this change has taken place, is far more important than to know the precise moment when it occurred.

We believe that regeneration is progressive; and we believe there has been a change in the heart from witnessing the fruits of the spirit—by examining our own hearts whether we possess the spirit of Christ, since we are assured that "he who is born of God doeth righteousness." Is it not therefore a perversion of the true meaning of Scripture, to apply the term regeneration to the first motions of a heart at peace with God; for even in those who profess to have experienced instantaneous regeneration we do not always find a corresponding change in their passions or their desires, and the spirit of Jesus is not always manifested in their daily lives. It is not uncommon—would it were!—to see some of high professions of faith seeking after wealth, or earthly honours, with an eagerness little becoming a professed disciple of the meek and lowly Jesus.

We object also to the manner in which the influence of the holy Spirit is often mentioned in connection with revivals of religion,—that much which is said is not only unscriptural, but appears to savour of irreverence. We have the assurance, that God is *ever* ready to give his holy Spirit to those who ask for it from right motives, and that the Spirit worketh in us to will and to do, not we believe by a miraculous agency, but by aiding us in our sincere efforts with the strength which God has promised. We cannot therefore approve of many expressions in use among other sects without some qualifications; neither can we always consider a revival of religious emotion a revival of the religion of Christ, though we are far from condemning many of the means now used to create and deepen religious impressions. Continued attention to this all-important subject, eloquent appeals startling to the slumbering conscience, and the excitements of sympathy have doubtless been the means, by the blessing of God, of bringing many to reflection and penitence, who might never otherwise have felt conscious of their sin and danger. They have also quickened the dormant energies and frigid affections of Christians in name to a life of more active and devoted piety. We would be truly thankful for all the good which we trust they have effected, and we would only guard against some of the errors and abuses to which even their earnest friends acknowledge them liable; and we would also vindicate Unitarianism, as a system of belief, from the charge of coldness and indifference in religion. We truly believe in the great central doctrines of love to God, faith in Christ, the immortality of the soul, and the righteous retributions of eternity—and have not these doctrines ever been found to be the power of God to salvation by those of every sect who have warmly and practically embraced them?

Still, as long as individual minds possess different peculiarities, there will be a variety in their religious experience, which is always in some degree modified by difference of temperament and education. Thus we see that the *goodness* of God leads many to repentance. The thought of undeserved mercies which have been showered upon them, through years it may be of sinful indifference, at length awakens gratitude in their hearts for such unmerited gifts, and induces remorse and repentance for past sins. They turn to the Saviour in penitence, love and faith, though not in despair and dread. They remember the threatenings, but also trust the promises of the Gospel. They would fear the justice, did they not adore the love of God as

manifested in Christ. They do not manifest their penitence so much by sighs and tears as by forsaking sin, and seeking the favour of God in humility—firmly trusting in the assurance that those who seek shall find, that to those who knock it will be opened. To many other minds the *terrors* of the Lord first appear. Some striking providence or startling appeal suddenly awakens them from their lethargy of indifference, and they view their past sins set before them in one vast array, and in their remorse they sink in shame and agony before the frown of a sin-hating God. But soon they see him as revealed in the Gospel of Christ, that he so loved the world as to send a Saviour for their redemption from sin, and that all who believe on him as such may receive pardon and eternal life; their souls are melted with contrition and love, they submit themselves gratefully and unreservedly to God as to a faithful Creator, and find assurance of pardon and peace. In one thing all agree, whether won by the love of God, or the fear of punishment; they all joyfully ascribe salvation to the free grace of God through Jesus Christ.

The question naturally arises, why may not human instrumentality be used, which by the blessing of God may result in a permanent and an ever extensive revival of religious feeling and principle?

The insensibility to the importance of religious truth so generally manifested is often alleged as a proof of the total native depravity of the human heart. We believe that the cause may be found in man's depravity, but not that this is a total, or an inherent depravity. It consists in the misuse or perversion of the faculties with which God has endowed us. Our moral sensibilities are often deadened or perverted by an erroneous education; indeed, parental neglect in regard to the early religious education of children is one of the most fruitful causes of religious indifference in later life. The human soul in infancy is given to the parents in trust. It is not then holy, for holiness is the result of moral effort, assisted by the needed aid which God imparts. It is not then sinful, for sin is the transgression of the laws of God. But the young spirit is innocent and pure, though possessing the germ of those faculties and desires, which being unfolded by age and education will carry him forward to an eternity of blessedness or of retributive misery. It is a trite but yet a most important fact, that the earliest impressions are the most permanent. Would it not seem then that all parents would be tremblingly alive to a sense of their responsibility in regard to their children? Should we not

naturally expect to see the most strenuous efforts, the most ardent anxiety, directed to the improvement of their moral and spiritual capacities? But is it so? Do not many who consider themselves Christian parents labour far more assiduously to gain an earthly treasure for their children, than to secure for them the incorruptible riches—a heavenly inheritance? This undue anxiety for the worldly interests of their children they sanctify to their consciences by terming it parental affection. But can that be called a true and Christian affection, which leads a parent to neglect the culture of the spiritual nature—the immortal soul, for the perishable dross of riches, the fleeting honours and fashions of life, or the outward embellishment of the dying body? Can Christian parents ever forget that souls are training for eternity under their influence and example?

If religion is to be permanently revived among us, if the world is ever to be regenerated by means of human instrumentality, parents may do much to hasten, or to retard, the period when all shall know the Lord. Their faithfulness to the spiritual interests of the children committed to their trust may be the means of leading many to the kingdom of God, who shall thus become instruments of good which may be traced in its effects through the endless ages of eternity. This is, and must ever be, true. How thrillingly fearful then the responsibility of parents! They may perform as acceptable a mission by their own firesides, as those who leave friends and country to extend the Redeemer's kingdom. Let Christian parents make the attempt, relying upon the strength and wisdom with which God will aid them, and they will find to their joy, that it is comparatively easy to impress upon the susceptible and yielding mind of childhood a love of God and of Christ, of truth and of duty, which coming years will not efface; and to implant sentiments of gratitude to God for blessings received, of truth and submission to his will, which will strengthen with the expansion and cultivation of the mind, and become permanent principles for the regulation of future life.

The practical inconsistencies of many Christians in their daily lives, are another cause of much prejudice and aversion to religion. Those who feel no interest in spiritual concerns yet expect to see the acknowledged disciples of Christ living and acting from other than worldly motives. Professing to be guided by the principles of a pure and holy religion, they are expected to manifest a deeper interest in spiritual than in temporal interests. Many Christians seem not to be sufficiently aware of the importance of exhibiting the fruits of their

faith in purity and holiness of life. They too often confound the idea of consistency with that of perfection of character. "A perfect Christian is one who *never* sins; a consistent Christian is one who *allows* himself in no sin." It would be well for Christians to consider this difference; we should not then so often hear the impossibility of attaining to perfection, alleged as an excuse for some manifest inconsistency. We cannot be perfect; but we may be, and we *must* be consistent, if we would be the true disciples of Christ.

Are Christians sufficiently careful to avoid all known sin? Do not many appear to think that they can make some compromise between their consciences and some favorite sin? Are there not many passions and desires indulged contrary to the spirit of the Gospel? Is the law of love, the golden rule of our Saviour, the rule of action in the several relations of life? Is the piety of Christian believers not only sincere but ardent? Do they not sometimes content themselves with bringing to God an offering from a cold heart, forgetting that he can be truly worshipped only in spirit and in truth? It is sad that such questions can even be asked of those who are the professed followers of Christ; but it is most true that in Christians, not of one, but of all sects, there is a lamentable deficiency in spirituality and in fervor of principle and of action.

Christian reader! would you exert your influence to revive a pure and undefiled religion in the hearts of men? Freely surrender your own heart to the power and faith of the Gospel, not partially, but wholly, and seek to cherish the principle of love to God and man in its fullest extent. Let your personal influence, your untiring energies, be devoted to the extension of Christ's kingdom; not only, nor always by direct efforts, but by your constant exemplification of the Christian graces, and your faithful performance of all personal and relative duties. So let your light shine before men, that they may be won to piety by the loveliness of the Christian character, instead of being repelled and prejudiced by witnessing your inconsistencies. Thus will a blessed influence go forth from your life to warm other hearts, and will prove one, among other means, of leading many to the only un-failing source of happiness. Trust not however in your own unaided efforts, but ask wisdom and strength of Him "who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not." Thus will a blessing rest upon your example and labors, and you have the assurance that "he who converteth a sinner from the error of his ways, shall save a soul from death and shall hide a multitude of sins."

M. S. W.

NOTICES OF BOOKS.

THE CLAIMS OF THE AGE ON THE WORK OF THE EVANGELIST.
A Sermon preached at the Ordination of Mr. John Sullivan Dwight, as Pastor of the Second Congregational Church in Northampton, May 20, 1840. By George Ripley. Boston: Weeks, Jordan & Co. pp. 54, 8vo.

This pamphlet includes not only the sermon by Mr. Ripley, but the other exercises of the occasion. And in few occasions have we joined with greater pleasure. The Discourse seems to us now, as it did then, to be one of high order. The title expresses its subject, and in a former number we gave its divisions. We speak of it now only to ask for it a general and careful perusal. To us it has power, and sets forth needed truth with clearness, discrimination, and warmth. We have seen nothing from its author that exhibits more spirit, or a truer excellence. The essential elements and grand ends of Christianity, as a distinct and divine system, are presented with unusual ability, and in a temper as Evangelical and truly Christian, as it is free and fearless.

The Charge by Dr. Channing, which makes a third of the whole pamphlet, unfolds the idea of Moral Perfection as "the end of the Christian teacher," and considers the means by which this end is to be accomplished. These are—study and inward experience. Simplicity, fervor, and courage, with a deep sense of the greatness of the office, are then urged upon the preacher as making the temper in which he should always speak. These points show that Dr. Channing is treating his favorite topics, but he who reads will feel that he is not treating them in a common way. We think it not common even for him. The simplicity, directness and appropriateness impress us deeply; and we feel the truth, here expressed, that "nothing is so strong as simplicity." We can add, that nothing is so much needed. It is refreshing, to see the plain and simple dress in which a clear and great mind brings out the greatest truths. Beside this excellence, there are discriminations and hints here which are not uncalled for, and a spirit

of fearlessness that is beyond all price. Give us moral courage; and may we often see it expressed and inculcated as it is here. It is to every one of us a Charge.

The Right Hand of Fellowship, by Mr. Osgood, of Nashua, and the Address to the People, by Mr. Hall of Providence the first Pastor, are also given, each of them marked by the characteristics of the writer.

A DISCOURSE ON THE LIFE AND CHARACTER OF THE REV. CHARLES FOLLEN, L. L. D., *who perished Jan. 13, 1840, in the conflagration of the Lexington. Delivered before the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, in Marlborough Chapel, Boston, April 17, 1840. By Samuel J. May.* Boston: 1840. pp. 30, 8vo.

It was natural perhaps, that Mr. May on such an occasion and to such an audience should present but one feature of Dr. Follen's character. Yet we cannot but consider it as an illustration of the danger of looking intently and habitually at one subject, and one claim. With decided and devoted interest in the cause with which the writer and the subject of his high encomium are connected, we do not enjoy this partial delineation. Nor do we think it was in good taste, to say the least, to make the delivery of a discourse upon the character of an individual an occasion for relating the history or reciting the praises of the Society before which the eulogy was pronounced. We particularly regret such intimations as the following, both in sentiment and taste: "All speak reverently of his name. Some there are who are contributing to record this sentiment in enduring marble, who have hitherto looked with a more than marble indifference upon the highest, the imperishable portion of his life." We must question also the correctness of the information on which Mr. May founded his account of Dr. Follen's connexion with the University at Cambridge; and when he says that "the doors of Faneuil Hall were thrown open, that the gentlemen of property and standing might crowd that sacred place to execrate the cause of liberty, and prepare their creatures to inflict that indelible stain upon the fair fame of our city, the mob of October 21," we lament that his sympathy with those who were the subjects of that unrighteous violence should have led him into the use

of expressions which ought not to have been adopted by one who has Mr. May's habitual reverence for the truth.

But with equal frankness must we express our admiration of that part of Dr Follen's character which is here presented. It was one of the crowning glories of one of the best and noblest men whom we have been permitted to know. His genuine invincible love of liberty, his moral courage in pleading everywhere the rights of man at whatever hazard, his fearless and magnanimous sacrifice of much, in both the Old and the New World, in behalf of this great cause, command our unfeigned respect and unreserved gratitude. The Discourse is worthy of perusal, whatever opinions may be entertained of the subject-matter which is so exclusively treated. In truth, strength and importance, the delineation which it offers is very valuable.

PORTSMOUTH SUNDAY SCHOOL HYMN BOOK, *Compiled for the use of the South Parish Sunday School, by their Pastor, A. P. Peabody.* Portsmouth: John A. Foster. Boston: Weeks, Jordan & Co. 1840. pp. 165, 18mo.

A hymn book, though it be only a compilation from other men's writings, is, we apprehend, one of the most difficult things to prepare. We have never seen any one intended for the use of a congregation with which we were satisfied, and therefore it is not strange that we still wait for one that shall correspond with our notions of what a hymn book for a Sunday School should be. It might not indeed be easy for us to define these notions. Mr. Peabody has made a good book, though we can imagine a better. It is quite large enough,—containing over two hundred hymns, and it presents both variety and a general regard to appropriateness in the selection of subjects. Many of the hymns we should not think suitable to be sung in a School, though they might be pleasant and profitable exercises for the memory; as for example the 93d, entitled “The Widow of Nain,” and the 103d, “Gethsemane,” which was new to us. One or two we were sorry to find in this collection, particularly that most unchristian hymn, beginning,

"I would not live alway ; I ask not to stay,
Where storm after storm rises dark o'er the way ;"

as if this fair world, full of God's beneficence, contained nothing but cloud and tempest ; and in a subsequent verse having these expressions,

"Who, who would live alway, away from his God,
Away from yon heaven, that blissful abode ?"

as if the Christian might not dwell in the very light and joy of God's presence on earth. These however are incidental blemishes in what we doubt not will be found to be a useful book.

To the hymns is appended a series of Scripture Selections, with which we are not wholly pleased. Passages from different portions of Scripture are brought together to form a Lesson ; this sort of mosaic work never strikes us agreeably ; we believe continuous extracts may be made from the sacred volume suitable for all occasions on which we wish to introduce its instruction. A part of these selections are also drawn from the Apocrypha, which in a child's book seems to us objectionable ; for however good they may be, we would not confuse in the young mind the distinction between the Bible and all other books. At least, they should not be placed under the title of *Scripture Selections*.

SECOND ANNUAL EXAMINATION OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL for Religious Instruction of Israelites in Philadelphia. Held at the Synagogue Mikveh Israel on Sunday the 29th of March, 1840, 24th of Veadar, 5600. Together with a Prayer by Isaac Leiser, Minister of the Congregation Mikveh Israel ; and an Address by Moses N. Nathan, Minister of the Congregation Shangary Yahshar at Kingston, Jamaica. Philadelphia : Printed by order of the Congregation. 5600. pp. 28, 8vo.

A Jewish Sunday School, established and taught by Jews for the benefit of their own children, is, in the language of the address before us, "a conformity to the customs of strangers," which we had not

expected to see. But with not less pleasure do we notice this disposition on the part of the "inflexible" Israelite to adopt "Gentile practices," which are not inconsistent with the letter or spirit of his own Law. The history of this institution is given in a "Memorial" included in the pamphlet under our notice.

"Sunday schools are nothing new among our Christian neighbours, as many sects of them have had such establishments for shorter or longer periods. Among our people, however, the case is very different, as far as the knowledge of the writer extends; and only at Richmond, Va., had the attempt been made, with but partial success, by the late Isaac B. Seixas, (then minister of that congregation, and since then of the synagogue *Shearith Israel*, at New York,) and the writer of this memorial, before several of our ladies, feeling that something might and should be done to improve the religious character of the Jewish children, and to give them at least an elementary and comprehensive idea of their duties, resolved on founding a school for the promulgation of religious knowledge on the first day of the week, it being a general day of leisure, and as it could be devoted to this pious object without interfering with the exercises of other schools, and the avocations of the teachers. This plan, which promised to be so beneficial, soon found many willing to co-operate; and the zeal of the teachers was seconded by the eagerness of the children to avail themselves of the opportunity to acquire a knowledge of their religion. The first assemblage of the scholars took place at the house, No. 97, Walnut street; but when the ladies had to give up the room they there occupied, the Franklin Institute, with a commendable spirit of liberality, permitted them to take possession of a spacious apartment in the old Masonic Hall, in Chestnut street, where the weekly meetings have taken place now for more than eighteen months.

As may easily be imagined, some prejudice was at first manifested by various persons, who fancied that they discovered an objectionable imitation of gentile practices in this undertaking, forgetting that it is the first duty of Israel to instil knowledge of divine things in the hearts of the young, and this institution was eminently calculated to bestow this necessary blessing alike upon rich and poor without fee or price. It is but seldom that so noble an aim has been sought after, begun solely for the glorification of our Maker and the well-being of his people; it is therefore gratifying to record, that this unfounded prejudice has nearly died away, and one cannot give a better evidence of the fact, than that now fully one hundred children are enrolled, and what is more, that nearly all attend whenever the weather is at all favourable, and this despite the great distance which many of the scholars and teachers have to walk, living as they do in almost every part of the city and suburbs."

The memorial goes on to state that some difficulty was at first found

in obtaining suitable books for the scholars, those published by the American Sunday School Union "containing so much matter of a sectarian nature, as must almost banish them from a Jewish school."

"The only other books within our reach were the *Elements of the Jewish faith*, by Rabbi S. Cohen, and the *Instruction in the Mosaic Religion*, arranged from the German of Johlson, by the writer of this. In this emergency the *Child's Bible Questions*, by the A. S. S. Union, was of necessity, but partially, adopted, there not being a similar book and one more free from sectarian matter at hand; but it is pleasing to remark, that an adaptation of this little work after our own manner is now in the hands of a young lady of this place, and will, it is hoped, see the light soon, and this with the consent of the A. S. S. Union, who have waived their copyright in our favor; this too is a highly gratifying fact, and it speaks loudly and emphatically of the enlightened views of the board of publication of that powerful institution."

The example set in Philadelphia was followed in New York and Charleston about the same time. In all these schools the superintendence and teaching are in the hands of ladies. A "*Catechism for Younger Children*" has been prepared and is in use. The examination of the Philadelphia school was attended on Sunday, March 29, and "the result far surpassed the most sanguine expectations." The exercises consisted of the reading of the cxxivth and cxxvth Psalms, a prayer by the minister of the congregation, prayer by the superintendent and scholars, singing by the children, examination of all the classes, singing of Psalm xxix by the congregation and the scholars, address by Mr Nathan, and the singing of a hymn written by the late Miss S. Hays, of Richmond, Va. The prayer is marked by a tone of humble and confiding piety. The Address is well written, and presents to Jewish parents the duty of providing for their children's instruction in that faith "under whose standard Israel and Judah conquered, triumphed, and under whose protecting folds they dwelt peacefully in a land flowing with milk and honey; and to which, though rent, tattered and trampled on, they have affectionately clung in misery and sorrow." This duty is urged as especially incumbent at the present time, when "gentleness and apparent sympathy for the fallen condition of Israel have assumed the place of former hostility." We admire, for we can in a measure respond to, the feeling with which the writer contemplates the position which his people hold in the history of the world.

"Our nation stands in the fore-ground of the world's great picture, the oldest, most conspicuous, and most prominent object; some which

once shone there in all the brilliancy and gorgeousness of light and colouring, eclipsing and overshadowing us, have disappeared before the effacing touch of time; others have been modified and changed, scarcely retaining a vestige of their original character; whilst we remain, sobered indeed in our tints, mellowed by age, but exhibiting the same outline, the same proportions, the same freshness, though attempts have incessantly been made violently to deface and alter the strong lineaments and features first impressed on us by the world's great Designer. But what force failed to effect, art may seek to accomplish."

NATIONAL HUMILIATION. *A Sermon, preached in the Hollis Street Church, Fast Day Morning, April 2, 1840. By John Pierpont. Published by request of the Hearers. Boston: 1840. pp. 16, 8vo.*

This Sermon is characteristic of its author—free, bold, and rapid in its tone of utterance, the outpouring of a full soul. It is more suited however to arrest attention than to carry conviction. It does not attempt indeed to enter into argument with a guilty people, but seizing on some of the prominent sins of the nation, holds them up for a moment in their true character that they may inspire abhorrence and self-reproach. The text is the address of the prophet of Israel to his countrymen, when they returned from the overthrow of Judah—(2 Chronicles, xxviii; 10.)—"Are there not with you, even with you, sins against the Lord our God?" Which question Mr. Pierpont deems to be applicable to the people both of Great Britain and of the United States, the two most "boastful nations" of the world. He admits that they have occasion for self-complacency, and sketches in a few paragraphs their claims to admiration. But then he shows the other side of the picture, and declares that "these two nations—the freest nations of the world, and the most enlightened, if we may receive as true their own opinion of themselves—the most Christian nations, if their own boastings are to be trusted—are doing more at this hour, by means of their wars for conquest, by their oppression of the conquered, and by their poisonous drinks and drugs, to desolate God's earth, to break down his kingdom upon the face of it, and to efface his image from the human soul, than is done by all other nations, Christian, Mahomedan and Pagan combined." He then notices the history of

British cupidity in India and China, and with a rapid but graphic pen describes the injustice of the great American republic towards the slaves of the South and the Aborigines of the land ; and closes with an earnest call to avert the displeasure of Heaven by repentance.

WHAT SHALL WE DO ? *Or a True Interest in Religion. A Sermon. By Rev. Addison Brown, Brattleboro' Vt. March, 1840. Published by request. Brattleboro' : 1840. pp. 12, 12mo.*

The immediate occasion of preaching this sermon, we presume, was the multiplication of religious meetings in Brattleboro' by some who favored the modern system of revivals. Mr. Brown, by a reference to some of the truths which were taught by Jesus—the paternal character of God, the worth of the human soul, the certainty of a future life—shows that Christianity is suited to excite a strong interest in the minds of men, an interest neither partial nor evanescent. “ True religion is a well of water, springing up in the soul ; constantly pouring forth from its deep pure fountains copious streams of life and joy. These fountains must be supplied from internal springs, or they will fail. If they receive no accession but from the pattering showers that fall from the inconstant clouds, they will soon become dry ; and thirsty and famished will be that soul which depends upon them for nourishment.” In view then of the importance of religion Mr. Brown replies to the question, “ what shall we do ? ” first, that “ we must remember that true religion is an inward principle ; ” next, “ that we must not rely too much on foreign, human aid to establish its reign in our souls ; ” that “ we must ever bear in mind, that Jesus of Nazareth is the Being to whom we are to go for instruction and for an example ; ” that “ true religion is an active principle—must and will show itself in action, at all times, and in every place ; ” and that “ extravagancies in religion, that undue excitements, that fanaticism and insanity on the subject, are the result of a faint and feeble and inconstant interest therein.” If the writer had said they were the result of a partially enlightened interest in religion, we should have been more ready to agree with him. Extravagance and fanaticism in most cases betoken their own sincerity. We have no other exception to make to the discourse, which we are glad the hearers requested for publication.

A SERMON, *Delivered at the South Congregational Church, June 28, 1840. By Rev. M. I. Motte. Published by request.* Boston : 1840. pp. 12, 12mo.

The occasion of this sermon was the late centennial celebration of the discovery of printing. Mr. Motte glances at the benefits and at the evils of which this has been the direct cause, and while he considers the former more important than the latter, offers some counsels which may act as an antidote to the possible mischief. "The invention of printing has multiplied books almost infinitely. This sums up both the good and the evil." As "the favorite and almost exclusive reading of our adult population is composed of newspapers, novels and religious books," he particularly remarks upon the character which these ought to bear, and reminds his hearers of the discrimination which they should exercise in their choice of books, that every book which is taken in hand may be,—not like the "little book" spoken of in his text, (Revelations x. 10,) "in the mouth sweet as honey, but as soon as eaten, bitter,"—but "honey to the mouth, yet not gall to the stomach; sweet in the perusal, sweet in the effect for ourself and our neighbour, for time and for eternity."

THE DIFFUSIVE NATURE OF CHRISTIANITY. *An Address delivered before the Sunday School Society, May 27, 1840. By Robert C. Waterston.* Boston : Weeks, Jordan & Co. pp. 24, 12mo.

Some account of this discourse, as delivered, has been given in our pages before. We have read it with new gratification, and desire to commend it to the perusal of every one. Its subject pertains not simply to Sunday Schools, but to the whole design and influence of our religion, as its title indicates; and the ease and force of manner, and the felicity of illustration throughout, give it peculiar freshness and interest. We have read but few discourses in connection with the all-important subject of which it treats, that have given us more satisfaction, or which we should rejoice more to see universally diffused.

INTELLIGENCE.

HARVARD UNIVERSITY.—The Commencement at this Institution took place on the 26th of August. The day was unusually fine, and in consequence of refreshing rains the preceding night the Cambridge dust was laid. The Governor arrived at an early hour, under the usual escort of a troop of horse—almost the only remaining custom of the old Colonial pomp. Many strangers of distinction were present. The exercises were of a respectable character and such as to do credit to the institution, as well by their tone of thought as their manner of expression. The speaking was good enough, though it has become so much the fashion to decry Cambridge oratory that we find many take its dulness for granted. The most remarkable fault in the performances was that one of them, under a Latin cover, poured contempt and ridicule on a certain class of officers in the College.

The degree of A. B. was conferred on forty-four persons. The honorary degrees were, of D. D. on Rev. John Codman of Dorchester, Mass., and Rev. Joseph Field, of Weston, Mass.; of L. L. D. on Governor Morton, Judge Dewey of the Supreme Court, and Professor Hitchcock of Amherst College; of A. M. on Rev. Theodore Parker, and Richard Kidder, Esq.

In the afternoon a meeting of the Alumni was held, at which a committee appointed last year reported the plan of an Association of Alumni, which was adopted, and the Association organized by the choice of officers as follows; John Q. Adams, President; Joseph Story and Edward Everett, Vice Presidents; Benjamin R. Curtis, Secretary; John Pickering, Horace Binney, Lemuel Shaw, Leveret Saltonstall, James G. King, Nathaniel L. Frothingham, Peleg Sprague, Committee. Arrangements are to be made for public exercises, &c. on the day before commencement next year.

The Association of the Picrian Sodality held its third annual meeting at 11 o'clock, and at half past 5, P. M. attended a public Address by Henry R. Cleveland Esq.; in which he discussed with remarkable beauty and judgement "the Duty of musical Amateurs to their Art." This Society seems to promise very useful results.

The P. B. K. Society celebrated its anniversary on Thursday. Rev. Dr. Boyle, Charles F. Adams Esq., Mr. Bernard Roelker and Edward G. Loring, were chosen honorary members. Prayers were offered at the public meeting by Rev. Chandler Robbins. The Oration, by President Woods of Bowdoin College, was a very long, elaborate and learned discussion of the mutual relations of Christianity and human Learning; the Poem, by Francis C. Gray Esq. of Boston, on American Poetry, was unfortunately not well heard. Rev. George G. Ingersol of Burlington Vt., who had been appointed and expected to deliver the poem, was detained on his way to Cambridge by illness.

CHRISTIAN UNION CONVENTION.—Another vain attempt, we fear, has been made to break down the spirit of sectarianism. A Convention was held at Groton in this State, on the 12th of August, in consequence of the following notice which had been previously issued, we know not on what authority.

An Eastern Christian Union Convention.—A Convention of the friends of Christian Union on Apostolical principles, will be held, Providence permitting, at Groton, Mass. on the 12th day of August next, at 10 o'clock A. M., to continue two or three days. The object of this convention is, to examine the Scriptural ground of Christian Union, devise measures for its promotion, and secure harmonious action among its friends. It will be a meeting of thorough friendly discussion. All friends of the Redeemer and of reform are invited to attend.

The Convention was organized by the choice of Dr. Amos Farnsworth of Groton as President, five Vice Presidents, among whose names we notice that of George Ripley, of Boston, three Secretaries, and a business Committee. The roll of members includes the names of many females. New-York and Ohio were represented by a few individuals, but the Convention was mainly composed of persons from New England. A thousand persons are supposed to have been present at different periods of the meeting; the roll contains the names of nearly 300. Letters were read from Gerrit Smith of Peterboro' and J. N. T. Tucker of Apulia N. Y. and Sophia L. Little; and a discussion took place on the evils of sectarianism, in which Mr. Edmund Quincy of Dedham, Mr. Alcott of Concord, Rev. Mr. Ripley of Boston, Rev. Mr. Hawley of Groton, Rev. Mr. Parker of Roxbury and others took part. We have seen only the report of the first day's proceedings. There was considerable difference of opinion, and during this day but little approach to unanimity. A friend, however, who was there informs us, that "it was a very interesting meeting—not less so than any he ever had the good fortune to be present at." The great difficulty seemed to be to define sectarianism; and it is both instructive and painful to see how little the true principle of union—the principle of personal responsibility to God, and to no one else—is understood. Mr. Smith in his letter declares himself to be "the advocate of *unconditional* Christian union," and expresses his hope that "the Convention will not attempt to settle the question, what precise beliefs or practices afford the necessary evidences of true piety;" but when he comes to define the ground of union, it is "the doctrine that every person, whom *in the judgement of the local church* to which he applies for admission Christ has received into fellowship with himself, has a perfect title to be received into its fellowship." So that the decision of a church is necessary to determine a man's claim to the Christian character. Miss Little was much more precise in her requisitions. "Christ," said she, "is the bond of union. And why is he so? Because *he is the ransom price*; the Redeemer of all their souls." * * Perhaps there will be among you some who do not believe that 'Christ died for our sins,' and in the progress and results of their creed deny the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures! Much as I may esteem the moral qualities of many such, if I would enter with them into the temple of Christian union, I am compelled to weep over them and part at the very threshold—we cannot pray together." Pretty strong language this, and rather

a distant approximation towards Christian union. Mr. Quincy defined sectarianism as "consisting in one man or one body of men undertaking to say authoritatively, who is or who is not a Christian;" Mr. Alcott, "as the intervention of human authority between a man's conscience and his God;" Mr. Ripley, "as the holding of property in the soul, because it claims the same absolute authority over the soul that slavery does over the body;" Mr. Hawley, as "that spirit in one Christian that attempts to make the opinions and conscience of another Christian yield to his own, and in case of a refusal to yield that will treat him as if he were not a Christian." Mr. Parker thought it "useless to attempt to define sectarianism until we know what Christianity is;" and said some things that must have sounded strangely in the ears of other members of the Convention. Mr. Quincy seems to us to have presented most distinctly the true view of the matter in debate.

We doubt however, as we have already said, whether any good will come from this or any similar convention. When "the great question to be settled" is thus stated—"Shall *acknowledged* Christians be treated as such?" we see only room for endless discussion upon the point—whose acknowledgement of a man's right to the name of Christian shall be taken as sufficient? The movement which has so far resulted in the Convention at Groton, we understand, proceeded from Trinitarian Christians who are dissatisfied with the spirit and discipline of their churches. As an indication of a tendency to more liberal views than have prevailed in such churches, we welcome it. A monthly paper has been established in this city, called *The Church Reformer*, of which Rev. Silas Hawley of Groton, the most active person in this movement, is editor.

RELIGIOUS ANNIVERSARIES IN NEW YORK.—We were unable at the time to give a complete account of the New York Anniversaries; some of them were noticed in our number for June. In our present mention of others we wish merely to show the extent of the operations of the great religious Societies of our country, of which we suspect our readers are not aware.

THE AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY, established at New York, celebrated its 15th anniversary this year. Of this Society S. V. S. Wilder Esq. is President. The receipts during the last year were over \$117,000, of which more than \$41,000 were donations; 34 new publications were issued, including volumes as well as tracts; 100,000 of each of several tracts were printed, and of two 148,000 each; total number of printed *volumes*, 325,000. The whole number of *volumes* circulated since the formation of the Society is stated as 1,444,810; and of publications, 55,259,399. \$20,000 were remitted the last year to foreign stations—in Europe and Asia, and \$20,000 more were appropriated. It is

impossible that a Society having such extensive operations, and acting immediately on the *minds* of those who receive its publications, should not exert an important agency in determining public opinion and feeling.

THE AMERICAN HOME MISSIONARY SOCIETY held its 14th annual meeting, the President, Henry Dwight Esq. of Geneva N. Y., in the chair. The "whole number of missionaries and agents in commission during the last year was 680. The fields of labour occupied were in 22 different States and Territories and in Lower Canada. The whole number of congregations supplied, in whole or in part, 842." The receipts of the year were \$78,345.

THE AMERICAN SEAMEN'S FRIEND SOCIETY are not effecting so much as we had hoped. Their income the last year from all sources was only about \$10,000. Seamen's ministers are regularly sustained in Portland, Salem, Boston, New-Bedford, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Charleston, Savannah, and New Orleans. In Boston and Philadelphia churches have been organized and the Lord's Supper is stately administered. The foreign operations of this Society appear to be principally confined to the support of preachers at the Sandwich Islands, at Havre, and at Cronstadt, and occasional cooperation with other similar institutions. At the public meeting Rev. Mr. Sawtell, the Society's minister at Havre, made one of the speeches, in which he so happily described the "sympathy" which it is the lot of some other Societies as well as this to receive from the people, that we extract a brief passage.

"Twelve years ago the good ship, the American Seamen's Friend Society, was launched in this port. The news spread around the world, that a vessel was freighted here with treasures for foreign climes. She was well manned. A veteran was placed in command; another experienced hand (Brother Greenleaf,) was to ply the oars. She was put to sea, almost without spars or sails, and the cry was that when the winds rose and the vessel needed relief, the people would be ready to extend their sympathy and aid. The people did watch with intense anxiety the progress of this noble ship, and when the storms came and she was ready to founder, the people cried, "Row away, brother Greenleaf, row away." "Why," says brother Greenleaf, "the wind and tide are both against me, what is the use of rowing any more." But the sympathy of the people was very great, and they cried the more, "Brother Greenleaf, row away." And the good man has rowed away, till he has almost rowed himself into the grave, and the vessel is not off soundings yet."

THE FOREIGN EVANGELICAL SOCIETY celebrated this year its first anniversary, which appears to have excited much interest. The object of the Society we understand to be, in the language of one of the speakers, "the reformation of nominally Christian Europe." Hon. Theodore Frelinghuysen is President, Rev. E. N. Kirk Corresponding Secretary, and Rev. Mr. Baird Resident Secretary in Paris. Over \$10,000 was received the last year, and was mostly ex-

pended in France, Switzerland, and Lower Canada, where a Swiss mission is established at Grand Ligne. The Report stated that "the particular channels through which the Society can now act with directness and efficiency on the Papal and other nominally Christian countries are—the Evangelical Society of France, the Evangelical Society of Geneva, the Commission of the churches (at Geneva) associated for evangelization, the American Committee of Correspondence, composed of gentlemen mostly resident at Geneva, the Evangelical Society of Belgium, the schools, the sea-ports, the French chapel in Paris, the American chapel in Paris, the Book Society at Toulouse, the Canada mission."

AMERICAN ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY.—The seventh annual meeting of this Society, in New-York last May, resulted in the secession of a part of the members, who were dissatisfied at the action of the majority in placing a female upon the business committee. Arthur Tappan Esq. having resigned his place as President, Lindley Coates of Pennsylvania was chosen to succeed him. Three ladies were elected members of the Executive Committee. The persons who seceded formed a new Association under the name of the *American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society*, of which Arthur Tappan of New-York was chosen President. This division among those formerly united in the anti-slavery movement has become extensive. Each party has now its own organization and its own journals.

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF THE UNITED STATES—This Church, as our readers know, is now divided into two portions, each having its own organization and each claiming for its highest course of judicature the title of General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church. The two bodies held their annual meetings in Philadelphia last May. The "Old School" General Assembly was in session from Thursday morning May 21, to Tuesday evening June 2. The roll of the House showed 143 members. 17 Synods, including 97 Presbyteries, are given as belonging to this Assembly. The meeting was opened by a sermon from the Moderator of the last year, Rev. Dr. Wilson of Cincinnati. Rev. Dr. Engles of Philadelphia was chosen Moderator. A large amount of business was transacted, but little that was of a nature to interest others than those connected with this portion of the Church. Reports were read from the Western, the Union, and the Princeton Theological Seminaries; the highest number of students at each the last year was—at the Western Seminary 31, at the Union 24, and at Princeton 115. Reports were also made by the Boards of Foreign Missions, of [Domestic] Missions, of Education, and of Publication. The Board of Missions employed the last year 256 missionaries in 23 States and

Territories; six in Texas, where four churches have been organized, and three or four houses of public worship erected. The Board of Education have had 270 beneficiaries under their care the last year. Rev. Dr. McDowell having resigned the office of Stated Clerk of the Assembly, Rev. William M. Engles D. D. of Philadelphia was chosen in his place. Questions of internal discipline were presented by appeal from inferior courts and in other ways, vacancies were filled in Professorships in the Theological Seminaries, various resolutions were passed, and the Assembly was dissolved, to meet again according to the Constitution in May 1841.

The "New School" General Assembly was in session from Thursday morning May 21 to Friday afternoon May 29. 88 members were enrolled. 16 Synods, including 86 Presbyteries, are connected with this Assembly. The sermon at the opening of the session was preached by Rev. Dr. Dickinson, the Moderator of the last year. Rev. William Wisner of Ithaca was chosen Moderator. Reports on the state of religion in different Presbyteries were read. Directors of the Princeton and of the Western Theological Seminaries were chosen. Some business of a local nature was transacted. But the most important measures that were adopted related to the organization of this part of the Church, and seems to us to go far towards an overthrow of Presbyterianism. The Constitution was so altered as to make *the Synods the ultimate courts of appeal*, by which the power of the General Assembly is of course greatly abridged; the General Assembly is in future to "consist of an equal delegation of bishops and ruling elders [ministers and laymen] from the presbyteries, in the simple proportion of one minister and one elder from each presbytery;" the General Assembly will meet triennially, instead of annually; and a Committee *ad interim*, or a Consulting Committee of five ministers and five ruling members, to act as may be necessary in the interval before the next triennial meeting, was chosen. The subject of Slavery was brought up in the Assembly, and a warm discussion took place on successive days, which resulted after various motions in an indefinite postponement of the whole subject. Some of the Southern members appear to have been as little satisfied with this decision as were a few others who represented the Abolitionism of the North. Rev. Dr. Hill of Virginia said, "It would now be necessary for the brethren at the South to meet and consult on the course for them to pursue in the present posture of affairs. * * As the Synods were now to be the ultimate court of appeal and they had a Synodical organization, perhaps they might think it best to take care of their own churches in their own way." We shall not be surprised to find that New School Presbyterianism gradually, and by not very slow degrees, lapses into Congregationalism. The Assembly was adjourned to meet in Philadelphia in May 1843.

The legal question between the two Assemblies is still in the civil courts, and it is said that a decision will not be reached in less than eighteen months from the present time. Some local decisions have been obtained from inferior tribunals, but the case which covers the whole ground is still in litigation.

BAPTIST SOCIETIES.—The Baptist denomination conduct their various religious operations on a closely sectarian basis. They decline even to connect themselves with other Christians in the distribution of the Bible, and have an *American and Foreign Bible Society* of their own; which at the last annual meeting, in New York, at the close of April, reported the receipt of nearly \$26,000 the last year. They have also a *Board of Foreign Missions*, which support 11 missions to Indian tribes, 3 in Europe, 1 in West Africa, and 8 in Asia; the receipts the last year were nearly \$58,000. The *American Baptist Home Mission Society* employed the past year 93 missionaries and agents, in the United States, Canada, and Texas. There is also a *Baptist General Tract Society*.

The Baptists of England have also formed a new Bible Society, called the *Bible Translation Society*; "the object of which is, to encourage the production and circulation of complete translations of the Holy Scriptures competently authenticated for fidelity, it being always understood that the words relating to the ordinance of baptism shall be translated by terms signifying immersion." This step was taken in consequence of "the refusal of the British and Foreign Bible Society to aid the translations made by Baptist missionaries into the languages of the East," but "not in a spirit of hostility or unkindness" to that Society.

PERIODICALS.—The publication of the *Christian Review*, the quarterly magazine of the Baptists, the suspension of which we mentioned in a former number of the Miscellany, has been resumed. The *Western Messenger*, the organ of Unitarianism in the West, which was also for a short time suspended, appears now regularly from the Cincinnati press. The *Dial* is a new quarterly journal, published in Boston, devoted to the interests of what its friends term a more *spiritual* philosophy than is exhibited in any of the previously established journals. The *New-York Review*, the rival of the *North American*, has attained a high character for talent, but abounds with the pretension and arrogance which too often distinguish Episcopalianism. No journal however deserves a wider circulation than the *Christian Examiner*, which in the hands of its present editor sustains its previous character. His own papers entitled "Scenes in Judea," written in the style of the "Letters from Palmyra," and intended to illustrate the condition of Judea at the time of the Saviour's appearance, would alone entitle the work to a place in the hands of every scholar or Christian. If the plan on which they have been commenced should be executed as successfully as it has thus far been prosecuted, these "Scenes in Judea" will constitute a most valuable help for the elucidation of the Gospel history, throwing light as they do upon the circumstances and feelings by which Jesus and his disciples were surrounded.

AMERICAN STATISTICAL ASSOCIATION.—A Society has been formed under this name, of which Hon. Richard Fletcher is President, and J. B. Felt, L. Shattuck, and J. E. Worcester are Secretaries. The object is "to collect, preserve, and diffuse statistical information in the different departments of human knowledge," with a view principally to such information as may be gathered from the United States. The directors will hold monthly meetings; the Association, quarterly meetings and an annual meeting on the first Wednesday in February.

BOSTON RECORDER.—Having for the last four or five months seen this weekly paper, which we receive in exchange for our journal, we are glad to speak of the ability and general good spirit with which it is conducted. It furnishes a large amount of valuable literary as well as religious intelligence, and communicates much fresh information respecting the scholars of Europe. Its notices of Unitarian publications are written in a very different tone from that which distinguished the Recorder a few years since. In all respects a decided improvement is perceptible in the manner in which it is edited. We feel the stronger obligation to express our opinion of its character, because we make frequent use of its columns in preparing our own intelligence.

WORLD'S CONVENTION.—A meeting was held in London in June last, from which many persons had anticipated important results, that seem not likely to be realized. It was called by a Circular from the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, and was attended by nearly four hundred delegates, from Great Britain, the British Colonies, France, Switzerland, and the United States. The session commenced on the 12th of June, and continued till the 23d. The venerable Thomas Clarkson, now in his 81st year, was chosen chairman and presided during a part of the first day, after which the chair was taken by W. T. Blair of Bath. Six Secretaries were appointed, among whom were H. B. Stanton of New York, and Wendell Phillips of Boston. A letter was read from Lord Brougham, regretting that his state of health prevented his attending the meeting. Mr. O'Connell was present and spoke repeatedly. A considerable part of the first day was occupied in discussing the propriety of admitting the female delegates of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society to seats as members of the convention; which was advocated by Mr. Phillips of Boston, Professor Adam of Cambridge Mass., Dr. Bowring of London, and others, but was opposed, and finally decided by a vote, "that the ladies be received with all respect, but not as delegates." On the second day Professor Adam exhibited the present state of slavery in British India. Mr. Morgan read

a letter from Dr. Channing on American slavery. Mr. Alexander presented the state of slavery in the Danish colonies. On a subsequent day the subject of American slavery was brought forward and seems to have occupied the principal attention of the Convention. Messrs. Birney, Galusha and Stanton of New-York, Mr. Phillips of Boston, Mr. Bradburn of Nantucket, and Mr. Keep of Ohio spoke at some length. On another day the French delegates, M. Isambert, M. Cremieux, a Jew, and M. Laure addressed the meeting in French, Dr. Bowring acting as interpreter. Addresses were also made upon the condition of Hayti, upon slavery in the colonies of Holland and Sweden, and in Mahomedan countries, and upon Spanish slavery. Resolutions were passed, expressing the sense which the Convention entertained of the wickedness of slavery, of the sinfulness of "many Christian churches, especially in the Western world," which give it their countenance, and of the duty which devolves upon them as Christian communities.

We have not seen a full report of the proceedings of the Convention, and therefore do not know but measures were adopted of which we have made no mention. But so far as we can at present judge, it was little more than a conference among those who were interested in the abolition of slavery, suited rather to warm their feelings than to issue in any practical results. Some of the delegates from this country were of course dissatisfied at the decision respecting the right of women to seats on the floor, and Messrs. Garrison, Rogers and Remond from New England, who arrived after this question had been decided, declined in consequence taking their seats as members or in any way acting with the Convention.

PROTESTANT SOCIETIES IN PARIS.—Recent letters from Rev. Mr. Baird to the editor of the Recorder contain accounts of the religious anniversaries which were celebrated by the Protestant Societies in Paris, in the week from May 4 to May 11 of the present year. We were surprised to find so many of these institutions existing in the capital of France.

The Society for the Promotion of Christian Morals has been in existence twenty years, and includes many Roman Catholics among both its members and its officers. Its objects are various—such as the suppression of lotteries and gaming houses, the improvement of prison discipline and of the penal code, the abolition of slavery, the protection of orphans and the encouragement of apprentices, &c. It is chiefly by its Reports and other publications that it does good.—*The Religious Tract Society of Paris* has put into circulation since its establishment, eighteen years ago, about 6,000,000 of tracts; the *Toulouse Society* is engaged in the publication of religious books.—*The French Protestant Bible Society* has been formed twenty years, and is represented by Mr Baird as "supported principally by the heterodox or unevangelical portion of the Reformed and Lutheran churches of the kingdom." For the first ten years "it

was necessary that it should confine its labours to the Protestants," but since 1830 the general distribution of the Scriptures has been allowed.—*The Evangelical Society of France* pursues the objects contemplated in this country by the Home Missionary and Education Societies. It has existed seven years, and has employed "pastors, evangelists, colporteurs [travelling agents for the sale of tracts and books,] schoolmasters and schoolmistresses," educated such, and aided in hiring or building places of worship.—*The Society for Evangelical (Foreign) Missions* was formed in 1822, and is supported almost wholly by the contributions of the French, while the other Societies receive aid from England and America. It has a theological school, or seminary for training young men for the missionary work, at Paris, under the care of Rev. Dr. Grand Pierre; and maintains an interesting mission in South Africa.—*The French and Foreign Bible Society* during the last year, the seventh of its existence, circulated 21,579 Bibles and 89,020 New Testaments.—*The Society for the Encouragement of Primary Instruction among the Protestants of France* was established nine years ago "for the purpose of promoting the establishment of good schools among the Protestants, under the instruction of pious teachers." Its resources appear to be small.—The total amount of receipts of these Societies (exclusively of the Society of Christian Morals) the last year was \$55,910.

UNIVERSALISM IN GERMANY.—The Universalist Expositor contains a translation of a letter from Dr. K. A. Credner, Professor of Theology in the University of Giesen, to Rev. T. J. Sawyer of New York, in reply to one addressed to Dr. C. by Mr. Sawyer in which he made "inquiries respecting the existence of the Universalist faith in Germany, particularly among the Rationalists with whom Dr. Credner sympathises." The letter is dated at Giesen, April 9, 1839, and is valuable for the information which it conveys, the most important part of which we copy below. It will be seen that Mr. Sawyer had "defined" the Universalists of this country "as those who believe that all the human race shall ultimately be received to God, and made holy and happy through the mediation of Jesus Christ," and that Dr. Credner supposes the Rationalist theologians of Germany hold the same doctrine. We cannot but think that in Mr. Sawyer's statement, there was a want of a full exhibition of the truth—such as we have noticed in similar instances before. The Universalists of this country, as a body—there can be no doubt, we presume—not only believe "that all the human race shall ultimately be reconciled to God," but that there will be no punishment for sin hereafter. This latter is their distinctive doctrine; the former they hold in common with the Restorationists, and with many, if not most, Unitarians. Now it does not seem to us perfectly fair, to send abroad a partial exhibition of the Universalist faith, and then having obtained the assent of writers in Europe to this exhibition as the expression of their own belief, to

represent them as Universalists in the sense in which the term passes current here. The same thing was done a few years ago in reference to England, and we speak advisedly when we say that the Unitarians there were ignorant of the peculiar tenet of Universalism in the United States at the time when they were described here as embracing the system. The Unitarians of Great Britain are believers in a future retribution, and so, we doubt not, are the German theologians of whom Dr. Credner speaks. So too, in our present state of information we are inclined to think, is Mrs. Sherwood, whose "conversion to Universalism" was mentioned in a previous number of our journal. According at least to common acceptance, the distinctive point in the Universalism of this country is not a denial of the eternity of future suffering, nor an assertion of the final happiness of all men, but the opinion that immediately after death all will enter upon a state of felicity. With these remarks we give the extracts from Dr. Credner's letter,—those which we have marked relating to the Rationalism of Germany as well as to the prevalent faith respecting another life.

To come directly to the main subject—you define Universalists, with whom you acknowledge yourself associated, as those who believe that all the human race shall ultimately be reconciled to God, and made holy and happy through the mediation of Jesus Christ. In this definition I find but one thing not altogether clear, viz. the meaning of the words, *through the mediation of Jesus Christ*. If this be synonymous with *through the gospel of*, or *through the doctrine of Jesus Christ*, then you may reckon upon the assent of all judicious (vernünftigen) theologians in Germany, called by their opposers Rationalists and also Naturalists; and of such judicious theologians there are still many, thank God, in the Protestant Church of Germany, and even the ablest, and for theological science and culture those among the most worthy, acknowledge themselves their coadjutors, and freely proclaim their opinions from the pulpit and the chairs of the universities.

There is some difficulty in giving a definition of the term Rationalist or Rationalism, owing to an abuse which has obtained in relation to this word. Those have been called Rationalists who, rejecting all extraordinary revelation, desired only a religion of pure reason, (Vernunft-Religion,) as well as those who wished to explain every thing in the Holy Scriptures in a natural way, and to discover in them every where only the doctrines of reason. Both of these modes of thinking, often designated by their opposers by the name of Naturalism, and in more recent times *vulgar* Rationalism, are to be considered as in general obsolete.

Those, on the contrary, are by the so called orthodox or zealous for the system of the creed at present denominated Rationalists, who maintain that the Holy Scriptures are to be interpreted, not according to dogmatic rules, but accordingly to the universally valid laws of reason, i. e. *rationaliter*, (rationally,) and that many a dogma of the church rests on a false hypothesis, and who still acknowledge Christianity to be a system of divine revelation.

Among the theologians now living who contribute in various ways to Rationalism, the following are distinguished: Baumgarten-Crusius, at Jena; Bretschneider, at Gotha; Gesenius and his school, at Halle; Gieseler, at Göttingen; Justi, at Marburg; David Shultz, at Breslau; Rochr, at Weimar; Winer, at Leipzig; Wegscheider, at Halle; and De Wette, at Basle; the latter, however, only in his exegetical and critical writings. In the Universities of Königsberg, Breslau, Leipzig, Jena, and Gießen, Rationalism is generally predominant. In Halle and Heidelberg, where this was also the case, every thing has been attempted to deprive it of its influence. In Berlin, a certain modern orthodoxy and Hegelianism are engaged in mutually jeering each other.

PERSECUTION OF JEWS IN DAMASCUS.—The Jews of Damascus have for several months been the victims of frightful persecution. A Roman Catholic priest and his servant having suddenly disappeared, the Jews were accused of murdering them that they might obtain human blood to be used in the celebration of a religious festival. Several were subjected to tortures of the most dreadful kind, and in the extremity of their agony some made confession—undoubtedly false—of the crimes charged upon them. The consequence was such an exercise of cruelty towards those of this unhappy race who were inhabitants of Damascus, that the attention of foreign powers has been called to the subject. Meetings have been held in London, both of Christians and of Jews, and a deputation appointed to visit Damascus and ascertain the facts. Meetings of a similar kind have also been held in New York and Richmond.

SANDWICH ISLANDS.—Recent accounts from these islands show a remarkable increase of attention to religion on the part of the natives. The success and usefulness of the missions established here seem to us undeniable. Eighteen churches have been gathered, having at present nearly 16,000 members; more than 10,000 of whom were admitted the last year, not however without careful examination and after probation in most instances of many months. Within the year eight meeting-houses have been wholly or partly built, five of which are of stone. The natives are already contributing liberally to the support of religious institutions. The first church in Honolulu,—there are two in the place—gave \$444 to the Oregon mission, besides \$300 towards the support of their pastor; and are building a meeting-house 144 feet long by 73 wide and 35 high. The translation of the Bible has been completed, and other books have been provided for the Schools. Domestic manufactures have been introduced. The decrease of population, it is thought, has been checked. We know that contradictory statements have been published in regard to this mission, but our own belief from all the information which we have seen is, that it has been productive of much good.

The conduct of the French naval commanders, both at the Sandwich and the Society Islands, has been discreditable alike to themselves and to the government which they represented. The arbitrary measures which they adopted for compelling a weaker power to comply with their demands by recalling the Catholic priests, and the exactions which they imposed upon the defenceless but independent savages by whom these foreigners had been banished from their territories for alleged offences, were unworthy of an honorable and Christian nation.